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Area activist challenges notions of privilege

BY DESIREE COOPER

Rosemary Linares is a bubbly 29-year-old with a master's degree from New York University, a supportive husband and an adorable stepson. From the outside, it looks like she has it all—including what she calls “heterosexual privilege.”

“I can share in my husband's benefits, I can determine his medical treatment if necessary,” she said. “I can be accepted in circles as an ‘ordinary’ wife and mother.”

What is not so obvious is that Linares is a bisexual Latina. “I'm used to straddling identities,” said Linares, president of Cross Movement Social Justice Consulting, L3C in Ann Arbor. “I identify as Latina because I'm half Cuban, but my heritage is not obvious when you see me. I identify as queer and bi-sexual, but I'm in a heterosexual marriage. I live between identities.”

Rebel with a cause

As a teenager growing up in Saline, Michigan - just outside of Ann Arbor - Linares felt like a fish out of water.

“Saline is conservative, middle class, white and heterosexual,” said Linares. “The proximity to Ann Arbor made it livable, but I never felt like I fit in.”

Even before she came out to her family at age 18, she was a vocal ally of the LGBTQ community. In her junior year of high school, she fought for the right to do a presentation about LGBTQ civil rights in her social studies class - a fight that she took all the way to the Superintendent of Saline Area Schools. After winning that battle, she started the first Gay Straight Alliance in her school (the staff sponsor for the alliance was threatened and had her classroom vandalized). Her efforts garnered her the \$10,000 national Colin Higgins Courage Award in 2001. The award

was founded in 2000 to recognize LGBTQ youth activists who have endured overwhelming hostility and hate, while conducting themselves with grace.

Linares's coming out was coupled with her growth as an activist. She first told her mother that she was bisexual after attending a Leadership Training Institute sponsored by the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network in 2000. “I had already been an activist for so long, it was really a non-event,” said Linares.

After high school, she attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where travel was a part of the cooperative education program. Using her award money from the Colin Higgins Foundation, Linares went to Miami, where she helped people with immigration and conducted HIV education; to Quito, Ecuador where she worked with children who lived on the streets; to Havana to study; and to Guadalajara, Mexico where she taught English.

After graduation, “the synchronistic unfolding of the universe led me to the Arcus Foundation in New York City, to help the LGBT social justice fund,” she said. “I got to see the philanthropic LGBTQ movement nationally and internationally.”

Her broad experience has helped her to accept her intersecting identities. “I'm a person of color who has white privilege,” said Linares, who serves on

the board of Detroit Latin@s. “I'm a bisexual woman with heterosexual privilege. When you have that kind of privilege, it's important to explore your feelings around it. Do you feel guilty or powerful? Having explored my own privilege, I've come to the social justice movement with humility and self-awareness.”

This time, it's personal

After earning a masters' degree in public and nonprofit management from New York University, Linares was lured back to the Ann Arbor area by her longtime boyfriend, Arnulfo Rivera. The couple married in 2010, the same year that she founded Cross Movement Social Justice Consulting to advance social justice by increasing the capacity of nonprofit organizations and building alliances across social movements.

Now she finds herself coming full circle, advocating for her 7-year-old stepson, who Linares describes as “a diva who has a drag persona named ‘Kalisha Shay.’”

“I love seeing the joy and happiness in his face when he plays with Barbies or does a performance to Alicia Keys, as well as when he plays with Leggos and trucks,” said Linares. “But I also see him self-

“I'm a bisexual woman with heterosexual privilege. When you have that kind of privilege, it's important to explore your feelings around it. Do you feel guilty or powerful? Having explored my own privilege, I've come to the social justice movement with humility and self-awareness.”

- Rosemary Linares



Rosemary Linares BTL photos: Andrew Potter

censoring when he senses that he won't be accepted. I'm saddened by that.”

She can't help but think that not enough progress has been made to guarantee LGBTQ rights for a new generation.

“Not enough policies have changed to protect the LGBT community,” she said, referring to the failure of the State of Michigan to protect LGBTQ youth from bullying, LGBTQ workers from discrimination and to provide same-sex couples health benefits. “Some of the policies make it feel like things are regressing.”

But the continuing challenges have only bolstered her determination to break down barriers for marginalized communities. Last year, she joined the board of Detroit Latin@s, a community based group formed in 2008 to bring greater influence and visibility to the Latino/a LGBT and straight allied community.

“Many in the Latino LGBTQ community feel isolated by language,” said Linares, who has been working with board members to provide inclusivity training for a Latino-based community organization. “We do partner with Affirmations and other groups, but there are issues specific to the Latino community. It's not just about the right to marry when you're in a same-sex relationship with someone who is undocumented.”

In many ways, her work with Detroit's Latino community reaches back to her college days when she worked in Miami helping people with their immigration status and providing HIV education.

“The motto for my alma mater Antioch College is ‘Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity,’” she said. “For me, fighting for social change is a lifetime commitment.”

Cesar Chavez GSA: A place to 'laugh or cry'

Students stand up, provide support when families won't

BY CRYSTAL PROXMIRE

DETROIT – When tenth grader Francisca Ibarra told her father she was joining the Cesar Chavez Academy High School GSA, he was not exactly thrilled.

“My father was mad. He thought that I would go lesbian, which is not true. I like boys and you can't go lesbian just by being around someone. You like who you like,” she said.

“I argued with him. I was speaking up and giving him reason and evidence that it's not right to judge. He was really Catholic so not really accepting. It hurt me a lot. I'm Catholic too, I love God, I go to church and I read the Bible, but I don't believe how everybody sees it. If the Pope reads wrong and people depend on him, then sometimes religion is not the best influence on gays. If religions are more accepting, then maybe people would listen to them more.

“We argued a lot about it and I felt bad,” she said. “I said ‘Didn't God say he loved everyone? Jesus died for gays. Why would God hate them if he made them?’”

“In the end he listened. Because I reacted really strongly, he said I had a really big heart and that it was okay to join.”

Ibarra is one of about a dozen active members of the charter school's Gay Straight Alliance. The GSA meets afterschool one day a week, where they talk about issues that affect them, play games, watch movies and in general are just there for each other. She says



The Cesar Chavez GSA provides students with much needed support. BTL photos: Crystal Proxmire

it's important that other students know there are people who will respect them and let them be themselves.

“In my opinion, a lot of people have things that are different about them. Not just gay people, but everyone. It's not a defect to be different,” Ibarra said. “What affects people the most is when they know they're not how

“For those that don't accept us, hate us, or try to contain us, just know that we're here, and the force you try to contain us with we will respond with ten times more.”

- Senior Marcos Carrillo, referring to the social pressures that society and family put on gay youth

they (the parents) want them to be. When I see a friend like that, that's gay, how they are really dependent on their family - at least in the GSA they can know that we want to know them better. We get to know each other and support each other. It's a place that's open for them to laugh or cry and have another family to count on.”

Sonia Ponce de Leon, a social worker, has been the staff adviser for the group since it started in 2006.

“As counselors and staff we see these kids through the years. Many cannot come out while they are in school because their families won't accept them, but often we can tell the ones that are gay or not. But of course we can't say anything. We just give them support and let them know there is a safe place if they want it. We see these kids suffer all those years in school because they can't be themselves but we see them on

Facebook later, when they are moved out, and they come out. That always makes us feel so proud. Like yes, they made it!”

In the heart of Mexicantown

Cesar Chavez Academy High School is in southwest Detroit, in the heart of Mexicantown. There are 740 students, many of whom come from traditional Hispanic backgrounds. Paperwork sent home with students is often in English and Spanish, and Catholic symbolism is prevalent in the neighborhood surrounding the campus.

Students in the GSA work to fight stereotypes among other students, and among parents and teachers. One of the GSA's co-leaders is senior Marcos Carrillo, who takes part in Empowerment Sessions with Latino Family

See GSA, page 7

Third petition approved in recall effort of Troy mayor

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

On March 15 the Oakland County Election Commission approved a third petition submitted by the Recall Janice Daniels group during a clarity hearing at the Oakland County Probate Court in Pontiac. This followed a decision made by the commission to reject the group's second petition on March 1.

According to John Kulesz, a local attorney, longtime resident of Troy and volunteer for the campaign, the group received numerous emails from supporters asking that they include the language of the second petition in the recall. “The new petition is simply a revision and provides a more complete picture of the many reasons why Janice Daniels must be recalled. Further, it addresses the issues that concerned Judge Hallmark and County Clerk Bullard,” said Kulesz.

The second petition was initially rejected because Hallmark stated that she had “concerns” about whether the oath of office occurred during or prior to the time that Mayor Daniels was

actually sworn in to office. Mayor Daniels took office on Nov. 14, 2011. According to Michigan's Recall Procedures, each reason for the recall must be based upon the officer's conduct during his or her current term in office.

The revised petition language reads as follows: “We, the undersigned, registered and qualified voters of the City of Troy, in the County of Oakland, and State of Michigan, petition for the calling of an election to recall Janice Daniels from the office of Mayor, for the following reason(s): (1) for referring to the Troy City Charter as a “whimsical” document in a November 21, 2011 interview with the Detroit Free Press; (2) for declaring, during an “office hours” forum on January 9, 2012, that “the homosexual lifestyle is dangerous”; (3) for publicly attacking city employees during the January 9, 2012 City Council meeting while reading a 20 minute “position paper” into the record; and (4) for failing to support a Federal investment in the City of Troy of over \$8.4 million, by voting against the Troy Transit Center project on three occasions (December 19, 2011,

January 17, 2012, and February 20, 2012).”

The group plans to circulate this petition to collect the required 7,985 signatures soon. To be a part of the critical signature-gathering step, email recalljanicedaniels@gmail.com.

Daniels' supporter files counter petitions

In response to the groups' recall efforts, Mayor Daniels' supporter and Troy resident Nicholas Cherasaro filed 13 new recall petitions on Mar. 12 against four Troy elected officials. According to a recent story by Troy Patch, the 13 submissions include 10 petitions to recall Mayor Daniels and one petition each to recall Councilman Wade Fleming, Councilman Dane Slater and Mayor Pro Tem Maureen McGinnis.

Each petition to recall Mayor Daniels cites a different reason for the recall:

“For saying she would bring speakers in who would tell the people at a meeting that the homosexual lifestyle is dangerous which

is supported by overwhelming documents that states that is true.”

“For wearing tan shoes with a black suit to a council meeting on February 20th, 2012.”

“For smiling at the public during a city council meeting on February 6th, 2010.”

“For having perfect attendance as City of Troy Mayor since elected in November of 2011.”

“For wearing a red hat with a red coat at the same time in front of the Channel 7 TV cameras.”

“For voting for the Troy Public Library to be open on Saturdays to better serve the people of Troy.”

“For going door to door and talking with city residents on their front porches.”

“For taking the oath of office to uphold the US Constitution of State of Michigan with is inclusive of the Troy City Charter.”

“For not voting for the Troy Transit Center because of the additional cost to the City of Troy for the years to come.”

“For asking the Troy Chamber of Commerce

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pridesource
media group

Vol. 2012 • Issue 756
March 22, 2012

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BY EMILY DIEVENDORF

Eye on Equality

Claiming a bi-place

The first time I was called “greedy” it was by a drag queen at the Michigan Pride Festival. She wasn’t talking to me directly. She was calling out audience members in the unapologetic, hilarious, and crass way only a drag queen can, asking one attendee if she was a lesbian. The woman said, “No, I’m bi.” The drag queen responded, “Oh, you’re GREEEDY.” Everyone laughed, myself included. But I also left thinking, “So that’s how it is.”

I could never be “greedy.” I have terrible luck with women. But I probably wouldn’t date you, male or female, regardless of luck. I’m very particular, maybe to the point of delusion, and my interest rarely has to do with physical attraction above all else. You would need to be funny, clever, overly literate, cultured, and committed to social justice. I’m also a serial monogamist and loyal to a fault, unable to focus on more than one person at a time. I’m not your stereotype, but few of us are.

I believe sexuality, as a continuum with no easy boxes to fit into, is the most logical explanation for the variations we see in human sexuality. Labels are vile and unrealistic to me, an attempt to satisfy others’ need for simplicity when life just isn’t so. I have struggled with how I would explain myself, resentful that I had to at all. My partners have always known me to be fluid and I hadn’t considered it anybody else’s business. At a certain point I decided that I had to claim my place in the community because my own invisibility would be part of the perpetuation of others pretending I don’t even exist. I wrote bi across my forehead and wore it proudly.

Sex and the City’s Cynthia Nixon recently found herself swimming in controversy when she told the New York Times that she didn’t identify as bisexual. After much explanation she clarified that she was capable of attraction regardless of sex but was turned off by the label. The label can seem ugly, as the stereotypes that are associated with bisexuality are unflattering and demonizing by societal norms.

Bisexuals are seen as promiscuous, confused, invalid, incapable of monogamy, oversexed, greedy, going through a phase, and on and on...

I claim the bisexual label because I don’t remember a time when I wasn’t attracted to both men and women, either in a romantic sense or as a manifestation of sexual attraction. A bisexual (pansexual, omnisexual, fluid) is someone whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional attraction is to people of more than one sex/gender. Bisexuality is still offered only tentative acceptance in the gay rights movement. The lack of mention is all the more interesting when you consider that bisexuals make up the largest group within the LGB community, with one third of

men and two thirds of women in the community identifying as bi. While most Americans don’t identify themselves by the label, a 2002 study found that 13 percent of women and 6 percent of men report being attracted to both women and men.

We now have studies that show bisexuality is both a real and stable designation. To prove our legitimacy a brave bunch of us (not me—ouch!) volunteered to be tested for arousal at the sight of sexy images of men and women. Those who claimed to be bisexual, gasp, were able to respond to both sexes. Studies have also disproven claims that bisexuality is a stop on the way to figuring out your sexuality. In one study 92 percent of participants who identified as bisexual or “without label” at the start of the study identified as bisexual and without label 10 years later.

“Bisexuality is still offered only tentative acceptance in the gay rights movement.”

The stigma, or biphobia, that comes with being bisexual has serious consequences. Bisexuals have higher incidences of depression, suicidal thoughts and attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, and poor physical health in general than their heterosexual, gay and lesbian counterparts. Bisexuals most often don’t come out to their health provider and as a result receive incomplete information regarding their sexual health. Bisexual women with monosexual partners have

an increased rate of domestic violence compared to every other female demographic. Compared to lesbians, bisexual women are twice as likely to live in poverty. Discrimination against bisexuals is greater in the workforce. While lesbians earn 2.7 percent less than straight men, bisexual women earn nearly 11 percent less.

There is an acute stress that comes from feeling like you are not a legitimate member of a community. In nonurban areas lesbians and bisexual women experience comparable levels of frequent mental distress, but in urban areas distress decreases for lesbians and nearly doubles for bisexual women. Resources and support are more likely to be available for lesbians in urban areas, and still likely to be nowhere to be found for bisexuals. Regardless of established need, projects addressing issues related to bisexuality are the least funded among programs for the lesbian, gay, bi, and transgender communities.

I’m currently dating a man. I refuse to hide him because being in a relationship with him is part of who I am. If asked about my sexuality I would expect him to answer without pause that I identify as bi. Still, when a man is my date to a gay rights event there is an uncomfortable and restless feeling of undeniable guilt that rests inside me. I feel like a traitor, I feel like I took the easy way out, I feel like I’m not relating and might, therefore, not be able to represent the queer community. In reality I know that those judgments come from the outside. When I’m dating a man, the truth is that I fell in love or in like and it happened to be with a man. In LGBT rights we fight for the freedom to love and the freedom to express our desire without shame. In our efforts to gain our basic rights to care for our loved ones we encounter enormous and shocking amounts of hate. I may not always be with a man but I will always bring my date to the party. I’m just grateful that love, my fluid ability to love included, exists.

Emily Dievendorf is Policy Director at Equality Michigan.



email: editorialcartoon@csyndicate.com

► **GSA**

Continued from p. 5

Services as part of their outreach to the young gay and trans community. He also helps come up with activities and discussions for the group.

"I want a mixture of fun and serious," he said. "We pick one topic each month as a theme. Like this month is self-acceptance." Other group activities include games, ice breakers, and an upcoming display about Presidential candidates. The group has also developed a non-discrimination pledge, participated in Day of Silence, created a special Allies Week, and helped raise funds to fight cancer and AIDS.

For Carrillo, activism is a big part of his involvement with GSA.

"For those that don't accept us, hate us, or try to contain us, just know that we're here, and the force you try to contain us with we will respond with ten times more," he said, referring to the social pressures that society and family put on gay youth.

Another GSA member, junior Hector Torres, gave an example of pressure that his well-intentioned mother put on him. "I did have a boyfriend," he said, "but my mom kept pushing me to date girls. My mom set me up on a date with a female friend and it was really awkward. But we were friends already so we just laughed it off." Torres has faith that his mother will "figure it out," but that his uncle who "just doesn't get it" continues to ignore the fact that he is gay even though he came out in the eighth grade.

Torres said he "just wants people to

understand what we are trying to do here. We're here for people who have nowhere else to go, so they don't have to talk to a teacher or their parents."

Michael Sepulveda, a junior, keeps an easy-going attitude with relatives.

"Either they accept it or they don't. Those that don't, I don't trouble them and they don't trouble me," he said. Sepulveda is the group's co-leader who believes that GSA should spread to other schools. "This school is really accepting, not like Detroit schools that don't have GSAs. Here you know there are people who don't like it, but they keep it to themselves. Before I joined I was really scared if I talked to gay people I'd be beat up, but I feel safe when I'm here."

Sepulveda hopes to study philosophy at University of Michigan. "I want to understand people and use it to prove our point. I want to get GSAs known and expand it to every school. GSA has helped me because I have met people and heard their stories. Other people have struggled just like I am and it helps knowing that people have gone through the same things as me."

Studies have shown that GSAs are beneficial to students and to fostering a more welcoming environment for all. To learn more about Cesar Chavez Academy High School, go to www.chavezacademy.com. To learn more about GLSEN, a network helping jump-start GSAs, go to www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2226.html.

► **Third petition**

Continued from p. 5

to put their promise to cover operating and maintenance costs of the new transit center in writing."

In the recall petitions for Slater, McGinnis and Fleming, Cherasaro listed only "voting to approve a Transit Center cost not to exceed \$6,272,500 grant to the City of Troy on January 17, 2012 (Resolution #2012-01-009)" as the reason he wishes to recall all three council members.

"This time, they've filed a pile of bogus, "joke" petitions with the County Election Commission. This is reminiscent of the three phony library millage proposals the same group of folks put on the 2010 ballot," said Matt Binkowski, who sponsored the original three petitions to recall the mayor. "It's not at all surprising that Janice's supporters would file 10 joke petitions with the County Elections Board. That's the problem with Janice and her supporters – they simply don't take the business of government seriously.

But according to state law, any reason listed for recall, even if it is not true or relevant to the recall, may be approved so long as the language is sufficiently clear and the reason pertains to something that happened while the elected official was in office. Mayor Daniels told Troy Patch that she is not worried about a recall election and in her statement on March 13 said, "Representative republicanism is challenging. It

always has been. It always will be. But with all its flaws, it is still the best governmental system known to mankind. Let the process work itself out."

Oakland County officials have told the press that the Michigan recall system is "flawed" and that they are "limited by law to decide if the language on a particular petition is clear enough to be circulated." The commission is there "to make sure the form is filled out properly, but it's not their job to determine motives."

Even though the goal of Mayor Daniels' supporters is "to obscure the legitimate recall efforts and create apathy among Troy voters," Binkowski said, "The good citizens of Troy won't be fooled this time, however." The group's website reads: "The people of Troy have grown tired of their ridiculous, self-serving political tactics. It's time to restore competent leadership to Troy. It's time to recall Janice Daniels."

A hearing for all 13 petitions will be held on March 28 at 1:30 p.m. in the Pontiac courtroom of Chief Probate Judge Linda Hallmark to "determine whether each reason for the recall stated in the petition is of sufficient clarity to enable the officer whose recall is being sought and the electors to identify the course of conduct which is the basis for the recall." This hearing is open to the public.

To read Michigan's Recall Procedures, go to http://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/Recall_Procedures2_211779_7.pdf

Esteemed social worker to present findings on LGBT youth wellness and families March 30

FERNDALE – Dr. Caitlin Ryan, founder and director of the Family Acceptance Project team at San Francisco State University is discussing practical implications and concrete strategies for rethinking approaches to supporting the health and well-being of all young people including LGBT youth in ethnically and religiously diverse families on March 30 at 9 a.m. at Affirmations Community Center.

Dr. Ryan and her Family Acceptance Project team have recently conducted new research on LGBT young people and their families showing that families have a dramatic influence on their LGBT children's health and well being. She will share these key findings with faith leaders, youth-serving professionals and other care-giving adults.

Existing approaches to serving LGBT adolescents have focused almost exclusively on serving LGBT youth alone and through peer support, rather than in the context of their families. Dr. Ryan's work changes the paradigm, to decrease risk for suicide,

homelessness, school victimization, and HIV/AIDS and to promote wellness and positive development for LGBT youth and young adults in the context of their families.

Dr. Ryan is a clinical social worker and has worked on LGBT health and mental health issues for more than 35 years. Her work has specialized in translating science into basic concepts for decision makers, diverse communities and the general public. Her efforts to assist LGBT children have earned her recognition by many professional and community groups, including the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights and the National Association of People With AIDS.

She currently serves on the LGBT Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and is a Purpose Prize Fellow.

There is no charge for this program and a continental breakfast will be available. RSVP to Judy Lewis at jlewis@goaffirmations.org or call 248-398-7105 for more information.



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Heard on Facebook

What do you think of the Rutgers trial verdict and Dharun Ravi's conviction?

Very sad. Two lives have been ruined by a senseless act.

–Michael Petroni

How can anyone say they “like” this? A young man is dead and another misguided young man will have to live with the memory of his role in a suicide. Simply sad, no matter how you look at it.

–Kevin Michael Finnegan Brown

He had previously rejected a plea deal that would have spared him any jail time or the threat of deportation, but put him on probation and would have required him to perform community service. The jury's verdict is just.

–Bradford Neil Ravi

This, like many hate crimes committed by young adults and children, was caused by bias taught by family and peers. No one wins. Many lives are ruined and many dreams will go unfulfilled for both the victim and the perpetrator. I hope that this incident will have the effect of continuing dialogue on both sides. Was the conviction fair? Yes. Was it satisfying? No.

–Dan Scaife

Calling it a “hate crime” is going too far, and I hold out hope that he will not receive the maximum sentence. It's a tough case, more than impugning one's right to privacy (a misdemeanor) but in no way equivalent to the violence of a hate crime. I hope the sentencing will reflect the difference. The trial should be a learning moment for all of us, but 10 years in prison is far too harsh a sentence. Definitely a “no win” situation for our legal system and all parties involved.

–Keith Hewitt

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



Join the conversation ...

Search: “Between The Lines Newspaper”

S/he Said Dharun Ravi's conviction

COMPILED BY HOWARD ISRAEL



Steven Goldstein

“The fundamental question in this trial was whether or not Dharun Ravi would have similarly invaded the privacy of a roommate having intimate relations with someone of the opposite sex, as Ravi did to Tyler Clementi and M.B. In our view, the answer is no – that Ravi would not have invaded the privacy of a straight roommate. In fact, the most compelling evidence in the case, Ravi's text messages, indicated exactly that. The text messages demonstrated beyond any doubt that Ravi was deeply uncomfortable with Tyler's being gay, and that Tyler's suitor was a guy.”

–Steven Goldstein, board chair, Garden State Equality, about the conviction of Dharun Ravi, the 20-year-old former Rutgers University student, for invasion of privacy, bias intimidation, witness and evidence tampering, and evasion of apprehension in connection with several incidents in September 2010 in which he used a webcam on his dormitory room computer to spy on his gay roommate, Tyler Clementi, who was with another man in their room, www.gardenstateequality.org, March 16. The conviction could land Ravi in prison for up to ten years with the possibility of deportation to his native India.



Marc Poirer

“Invasion of privacy is a very odd crime for bias intimidation or hate crimes. It's usually something violent – baseball bat, swastikas, cross burning. Maybe it's new territory, lots of things involving computers are. The case was really a stretch. I think the evidence is pretty weak on bias intimidation. Though the suicide was technically not part of the case, it loomed over the proceedings. I think there was clearly political pressure by one segment of the gay community ... to make Ravi an example because there have been and continue to be gay suicides and there continue to be examples of bullying. But a bias intimidation conviction won't do anybody any good. I think that people who want to police odious behavior will be encouraged, even when it's not appropriate to criminalize it, and I think there will be a backlash in terms of people who blame the gay community for being motivated by vengeance rather than justice.”

–Marc Poirer, openly gay professor of law and sexuality at Seton Hall University School of Law in New Jersey, about the conviction of Dharun Ravi, <http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com>, March 14.



Joe Clementi

“You're going to meet a lot of people in your lifetime. Some of these people you may not like. Just because you don't like them doesn't mean you have to work against them. When you see somebody doing something wrong, tell them: ‘That's not right. Stop it.’ The change you want to see in the world begins with you.”

–Joe Clementi, father of Tyler Clementi, in a brief message to middle- and high-school students, after the conviction of Dharun Ravi, <http://nytimes.com>, March 14.



Suzanne B. Goldberg

“The debate in this case was: Was this a stupid college prank or criminal intimidation? And the jury gave a clear answer.”

–Suzanne B. Goldberg, law professor, gender law expert at Columbia Law School, about the conviction of Dharun Ravi, <http://nytimes.com>, March 14.

Parting Glances



Pages past tense #4

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Detroit's imposing, massive, block-wide Masonic Temple, now virtually empty, was built in 1922, or, cornerstone dated 5022, following the Hebraic custom of noting esoteric history.

At one time in the 1960s every major dance company in the world, classical music orchestra, and performer appeared there; many brought to the city by famed impresario Sol Hurok.

I heard Paul Paray many times conduct the DSO, thrilled to soprano Maria Callas in red-carpet recital (her conductor arrested at the long-closed, seedy Stone movie theater), saw Russian defector Rudolph Nureyev and Dame Margot Fonteyn dance a memorable "Swan Lake".

(Curiously, too, a few years ago I attended a Freak Gathering in a small masonic auditorium, where leathermen and women, SM/BD devotees, straight and gay kink comrades gathered for an evening of mutual exposure, mental angst, playpen seduction. A BTL former editor was a self-styled dom. I, her 95-percent vanilla guest.)

Across from the Masonic Temple is Cass Park, named for former Michigan governor Lewis Cass. As a kid I spent my summers playing there, wading its centrally located fountain, and, as a nascent gay, enjoying looking at my collection of "Strength & Health" magazines, admiring muscle idols Clarence Ross and Steve Reeves.

At the edge of the park is a statue of Scottish poet Robert Burns. When the statue was dedicated in 1923, thousands gathered for a massed picture taken honoring the unveiling. (How many today know or care who Robert Burns was?)

I played tag around the statue. On three sides are poetry quotes I learned by heart: Nae man can tether time nor tide./ From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs./ Wee modest crimson flower, thou has met me in an evil hour.

For fun my friend Joan McGonical and I would pretend we were European survivors of World War II. We'd fake German accents, and talk in earshot of park benches about bombings, black outs, the horrors we had endured. Occasionally listeners who felt sorry for us - or liked our performances - gave us nickels and dimes.

I suppose I was about 16 one mid-June, no-school day as I sat alone relaxing, soon to be joined by an older, athletic-looking guy who was probably about 30. He asked if he might join me and I said yes, pleased for the company.

Marcus said he was home on leave from the navy, and was visiting a friend who lived nearby. "Would you like a Coke?" he offered, pointing to a nearby drug store. "Sure, why not?" I agreed, somewhat eagerly.

After our coke and conversation, he asked if I'd like a ride to Palmer Park. "I'd like to, but I have to be home for dinner soon," I hesitated. "Can we meet tomorrow?" I offered, hopefully. "Sure. Let's meet at noon," Marcus smiled, patting me on the shoulder. "Anchors away!"

Next day I put on a clean shirt. Brilcreem'd my hair - "A little dab will do you," ran the radio commercial - and arrived at 11:15. I sat there for an hour. Waiting. Waiting. Marcus never showed. Soon it began to rain. It was a disappointment. The first of many in my young, just-coming-out, gay life."

Charles@pridesource

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Creep of the Week Rush Limbaugh

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI



Rush Limbaugh

Poor Rush Limbaugh. Can't a guy even call a girl a slut on the radio these days without people getting all mad? It's not like he called a private citizen a prostitute, and then said she should post videos online of all the sex she's having in order to "pay" for her birth control pills.

Oh, wait. That's exactly what he did. And it is apparently a very big deal. Advertisers are fleeing from Limbaugh's show faster than you can say "birth control pills are basically Skittles for whores."

And good for those companies for speaking out against blatant misogyny in the only speech that is actually free in America: money.

Still, I can't help but think, "What the hell took so long?" Because the fact is, this guy has had a hate spout in his mouth for decades. His long history of misogyny, racism, homophobia and classism is well documented.

So what happened? Is it all some kind of Muslim Femi-Nazi plot unleashed by the Obama Administration? Is it that he crossed a line by targeting a private citizen? Or could it be that by assailing women's access to birth control, Limbaugh has finally pissed off enough straight women that they're actually paying attention and they don't like what they're hearing?

Rush is a megaphone for all of the rabid anti-choice, anti-women politicians and voters in America. It's no fluke that his anti-Fluke ranting coincides with the shit ton of bills and proposals flying out of mostly male pie holes nationwide.

Bills that would mandate forced vaginal ultrasounds, allow employers to fire women who use birth control, mandating that a woman must carry a dead fetus to term, exempting employers from

having to cover birth control if it bothers their delicate moral or religious beliefs, allowing a doctor to withhold any negative results from prenatal tests that may tip the scales toward abortion, refusing funding for women's health if any of it is to go toward birth control. The list goes on. Margaret Sanger would be so pissed.

These are actual proposals being seriously suggested. In America. In 2012. Limbaugh's merely providing the soundtrack.

So I have to say that I wasn't surprised by Limbaugh's "slut" comments. Nor am I surprised by the assault on birth control and the women who use it or want access to it. Is this trend alarming? Sure.

Advertisers are fleeing from Limbaugh's show faster than you can say "birth control pills are basically Skittles for whores."

While these debates aren't new, it certainly is remarkable that today a Republican candidate for the presidential nomination can say on national TV that a woman should look at a rape-induced pregnancy as a gift from God and then still go on to win primaries.

For years I have been inundated with creeps trying to take away and restrict access to rights for myself and for my family. I, along with all LGBT people, have been characterized as a sex-pervert undeserving of equal protection under the law. I've listened to countless elected officials debate the most intimate details of my life – love, sex, family – and declare that I don't have a right to any of them because I've "chosen" the "gay lifestyle."

So all of this "slut shaming" that folks like Limbaugh are doing, all of this anti-woman legislation, it's been coming down the pike all along. For years gay and lesbian activists, myself included, have been saying to straight folks, "Look out. These guys are coming after you next." And part of me, I have to say, feels a tinge of "I told you so" directed at all of the hetero folks who never really felt they had a stake in this fight.

Welcome to the club. Better late than never.

Murderer of gay man convicted

Victim stabbed 132 times

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

On March 14 it only took the jury two hours to convict 20-year-old Andrew Terrell Clark of murder in the November 2010 fatal stabbing of gay man that he targeted through an online dating service. Robert Miller, 57, was stabbed 132 times in his condo in Warren on Nov 23, 2010. The killer stole his car and other belongings, and left an unsettling note for the victim's family.

Reports in The Macomb Daily and Detroit Free Press describe how Clark created a profile on www.megamates.com as a way to lure gay men into dates and then rob them. He set up the account just 13 days before meeting Miller, who had been using his megamates.com account for years. They had at least 40 phone conversations in the days leading to the murder, which took place in Miller's home.

Miller was found on the dining room floor, having bled to death from the wounds. A note on the scene said "He said tell the Family he loves them. Sincerely(sic), the Killer."

Clark stole the victim's computer, cell phone, jewelry and car. The car was found in flames a day later with

the computer inside, just blocks from Clark's home in Detroit. Miller's cell phone was found in the trash by a Detroit sanitation worker, with more than 40 phone calls between that and Clark's landline number. Clark also pawned two of Miller's rings, and had the victim's earrings in his home.

Clark also left a fingernail at the crime scene.

Police found a notepad in Miller's

condo with a list of names. The last name on the list was "1060 Andre," Clark's megamates.com user name.

Clark was convicted of first-degree murder, larceny and arson. On April 24, Judge James Biernat Jr. in Macomb County Circuit Court in Mount Clemens will be sentencing Clark to life in prison without parole in accordance with state law.

Safety guidelines

In response to Miller's attack, Equality Michigan issued safety guidelines for online dating:

- Think about an escape route in advance, in case of danger.
- Tell someone where you are going and how long you will be gone.
- Look for well-lit, public, open and secure areas in which to meet.
- Trust your gut instinct: If you get bad vibes from the person, leave.
- Never show that you feel intimidated, frightened or "out of control."
- Never let the pick-up know you are alone. Let them think that you have a friend who knows where you are.
- At any sign of trouble make as much noise as possible. Carry a whistle or personal alarm.
- If forced to fight, use whatever you can as a weapon - your stilettos, bag, sharp ring, belt buckle or anything that will inflict pain.

- Strike vulnerable areas of the body (eyes, throat, nose, fingers, crotch, knee, feet); these hurt the most.

- Be cautious about revealing information that could identify you. For example, if you give someone your listed phone number, he or she can get your real name and street address.

- For your first meeting, pick a place that's public and neutral. If you're traveling to visit the person in his or her town, pick a place you're comfortable with when you arrive.

- Always carry a cell phone. This will allow you to call 911 at any time. If finances are tight, purchase a pre-paid cell phone.

- Know that violence is never your fault, no matter what.

Equality Michigan provides victim services, crime tracking, and advocacy throughout the State. To learn more about how to protect yourself against violence, or to report a hate crime, visit their website at www.equalitymi.org

Mark your calendar for Transgender events

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

The boards of Transgender Detroit and Transgender Michigan are busy getting ready for the springtime events that attract transgender people and allies from all across the region. Michelle Fox-Phillips of Transgender Detroit and Rachel Crandall of Transgender Michigan recently shared information about events, which they often plan collaboratively.

Fox-Phillips is especially proud of the way last year's Visibility Day of Service came together. "Last year we did Forgotten Harvest and Greening of Detroit. They plant vegetable gardens around the city. We transplanted vegetable seedlings from one tray to a larger tray," she said. "We went because we want to get the transgender community visible to the straight community and in the LGBT community. We want to let people know that we're just like anybody else, not just like freaks you see on tv."

The expansion of Transgender Day of Empowerment is also an exciting

development for the transgender community. Fox-Phillips said there will be 10-15 workshops that day, including a one-hour self-defense class and presentations about hormones, electrolysis, makeup, wigs etc, and other programs of interest to transgender people and their allies.

Social events, like the Transgender Day of Visibility Open Mic Night and the Easter Potluck give people a chance to be vocal, to have fun and to vent, in a setting among friends.

Check out these events:

Thursday, March 29 - International Transgender Day of Visibility

Open Mic Night 6:00PM to 9:00PM at Five 15 (515 S. Washington, Royal Oak)

Bring your stories, songs, poems, or rants (no interpretive dance please) about your experience with transgender or gender non-conformist identities, issues, and communities. Friends and Allies welcome. No cover charge, but snacks and drinks are available for purchase.

Friday, March 30 - International Transgender Day of Visibility

Service Day

Show your visibility by serving the community. Meet at 8:30 AM at Affirmations (290 West 9 Mile Road, Ferndale), then carpool to Gleaners Community Food Bank from 9-noon, lunch from noon-2PM (to be announced), and Forgotten Harvest (21800 Greenfield, Oak Park) from 2PM to 5PM

Sunday, April 8 - Easter Potluck Dinner at Affirmations (290 W. 9 Mile, Ferndale), 4PM, bring a dish to share.

Saturday, April 14 - Transgender Day of Empowerment. This day-long series of workshops will take place at Affirmations (290 W. 9 Mile, Ferndale). The planning committee will meet soon to finalize a schedule, but for now it looks like there will be workshops on self-defense, electrolysis, makeup and wigs, and a hormone workshop by CVS Pharmacy.

Find out more about Transgender Detroit at www.transgenderdetroit.org. Find out more about Transgender Michigan at www.transgendermichigan.org.

DOW Chemical employee's quest for LGBT rights

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

MIDLAND – “In conservative states, like Michigan, we have more protections when we’re working on DOW Chemical property than we do when we step outside the gates to go home.”

That’s one of the reasons Coastal Crop Field Research and Development Leader Bill Hendrix has been involved in the world-wide company’s LGBT rights programs for the 22 years he’s been with DOW. He recently turned over the reins after six years of serving as the chair of the company’s Gays, Lesbians and Allies at Dow (GLAD) Network. It is one of seven networks working to promote an increasingly diverse and inclusive workplace. There are 120 local chapters of their group, all growing out of GLAD that started in 2000.

Dow has made Human Rights Campaign’s Best Places to Work 2012 list for the eighth year in a row, and The International Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (IGLCC) awarded Dow Chemical Company second place as a leading corporation in the second edition of the International Business Equality Index. The index is a measurement of the performance of multinational corporations in relation to diversity and inclusion issues specifically focusing on LGBT communities in the countries where they operate.

Hendrix has testified before Congress on behalf of the Midland, Michigan-based multinational corporation. First before the House Committee on Education and Labor to argue for ending transgender discrimination in 2008, then again in 2009 to testify before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in favor of domestic



Bill Hendrix has been involved in Dow Chemical’s LGBT rights programs for 22 years and testified before congress on behalf on LGBT equality. Photo courtesy of Bill Hendrix

partner benefits for federal employees.

The testimony was given to show that not only are human rights an ethical issue, they also make good business sense. Hendrix explained to the Senate Committee, “Specifically, our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender policies have been good for our workplace for two main reasons: a) retention of our employees has been enhanced,

“In conservative states, like Michigan, we have more protections when we’re working on DOW Chemical property than we do when we step outside the gates to go home.”

because they know that they can perform their jobs openly and with full support of their family situation without fear of repercussion and therefore have more reason to be committed to the company in return, and b) better recruitment of allies and younger workers, who often use employee benefits, such as support for domestic partnerships and flexible work hours, as a litmus test for prospective employers.”

Dow transgender advocacy

Dow meets the HRC’s increasingly stringent criteria because they were at the forefront of advocating for transgender rights and health benefits. Beyond the benefits, the support organizations, and the language of equality in company policy, Dow looks at every process to see if people are being welcomed and treated fairly. “One thing we consider is the idea of parity. For example sometimes families travel on the corporate jet, and we make sure that someone’s partner has the same rules and is treated the same as someone’s spouse. We give employees support during transitions, like when moving from one city to another. We give plane

tickets and moving help for a partner the same as we do for a spouse. We look at all of our policies, perks and situations that could come up and we look to see if there is parity.

“Another thing we do is looking for ways to support diversity outside of the company. We want the communities we operate in to be welcoming and diverse,” Hendrix said. Dow is a regular sponsor of the Pride celebration in Midland, and the AIDS walk. Each GLAD site is active in the community they are in. At a national level they are Out and Equal sponsors, which is a great resource for companies. We have been a corporate sponsor for PFLAG for about six or seven years.

“One of the things we’re very proud of is that people in the network donate \$5,000 each year for scholarships. We make an impact with the students. It lets them know that they can be themselves and go out into the world knowing that there are places where they can work without having to hide. We also give a scholarship to an ally, to help encourage change in the culture.”

He said that Dow was leading the way for change worldwide by bringing these values to all places where they do business. “One of our team members and his partner moved to Dubai. They had a very successful two years in Dubai together, because of the way Dow Chemical operates.”

Learn more online:

To find out more about diversity at Dow, check out their corporate website www.dow.com/diversity, or their GLAD Network site www.dow.com/diversity/environment/allies.htm.

Muskegon: Right political climate for ordinance

BY JIM LARKIN

What a difference 30 miles – and a different political climate – makes!

Nine months after Holland, its Lake Michigan shoreline neighbor to the south, rejected a proposal to include sexual orientation and gender identity in its anti-discrimination ordinance, Muskegon appears primed to approve the same issue.

On March 12, the Muskegon City Commission directed City Manager Bryon Mazade to work with the city attorney to draft language that would include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender in the city’s anti-discrimination policies. And unlike Holland, where five council members rejected an identical proposal, there was no opposition in Muskegon.

“I’d like to think it’s because we’re progressive,” said city resident Roberta King, who wrote a letter to the commission a few months ago proposing the change and requested it Monday at the commission meeting. “I think it could be because Muskegon has always been

very racially diverse and it’s easier for us to accept change.

“It’s the right thing to do,” she added. “A lot of cities are moving this legislation forward right now.”

Indeed, Muskegon would become Michigan’s 19th city or township with anti-discrimination protections for gay people and 10th in the 2000s to enact either policies or ordinances providing such protections. The issue is also currently being discussed in several Michigan cities.

It was Holland’s battle over the issue that prompted King to propose it for Muskegon. The two, after all, have some similarities: Both are on the Lake Michigan shoreline, both cities have populations in the 30,000s

(Muskegon, about 38,000; Holland, about 33,000). And they are only 33 miles apart.

Mazade described Muskegon as “very diverse, socially and economically.”

But the two cities also have stark differences.

Muskegon is Democratic, Holland Republican; Muskegon has a sizeable Black population, Holland a sizeable Hispanic population. And while Muskegon may be progressive, Holland is considered one of the most conservative areas in the state.

“I have been observing what was going on in Holland and I wanted to see if Muskegon could move it forward,” said King, who works in Grand Rapids Community Foundation’s public relations and marketing department. “I believe it’s important people are protected against discrimination.”

Still, she admits she was

surprised no one objected to the measure at Monday’s meeting. Three people, all in favor, spoke from the audience. And the matter was on the commission’s agenda and written about Monday morning on mlive.com. Even the responses on that Muskegon Chronicle’s website contained little opposition.

In contrast, King said, about 80 people showed up recently when a proposal was made to build a road through a sand dune.

But she thinks it may not remain that way, especially when the City Commission considers approving the language at a future meeting.

“I suspect there may be some people who will come out and oppose it,” King said.

Mazade said it’s likely the city will add an amendment to the city’s existing policy but added he wasn’t sure when the issue would come back to the City Commission. He said he wasn’t sure how residents would respond once they are informed of the commission’s movement toward adding LGBT people to those protected by the policy.

“It’s too early to tell,” he said.



Muskegon resident Roberta King initiated the request for an ordinance.

Special series coverage

HIV in Detroit: Officials, activists agree it's a crisis

BY TODD HEYWOOD

With some zip codes in the city of Detroit registering three times the national prevalence of HIV, city and state officials say the disease is absolutely a crisis in the city.

"We believe that any time when a disease disproportionately impacts any race, group, or community, there is a crisis," wrote Loretta Davis, Department of Health & Wellness Promotion Director and Public Health Officer, in response to a series of questions posed by The American Independent and BTL. "Yes, there is a 'crisis.'"

The overall rate in the city is .6 percent, on par with the U.S. prevalence of the infection. But some of the zip codes in the city have a prevalence rate up to 1.88 percent, three times the national average. The disease is disproportionately impacting African American men who have sex with men.

In response to the question "Does Detroit

have a crisis with HIV?" Angela Minicucci, spokesperson for the Michigan Department of Community Health, responded by email, "National investments in HIV have contributed to dramatic reductions in the annual number of new infections since the peak of the epidemic in the mid-1980s. However, the HIV crisis in America is far from over, this is not something that is unique to any one city. HIV is distributed disproportionately in Michigan. The city of Detroit has 37 percent of those living with HIV but only 9 percent of the general population."

In a follow-up, Minicucci wrote,

"MDCH does believe that the HIV rates in Detroit are a continuing crisis, however, it's important to note that this crisis has been ongoing since the mid-1980s and has decreased since that point. The situation in Detroit is a not an issue that is unique to just that city as this crisis is one that can be seen across America."

HIV and homelessness

Michigan, like other parts of the nation, is actually seeing increases in number of new cases in at least one demographic – young people. The

Ruth Ellis Center staff say that 40 percent of the youth they work with – who are mostly African American LGBT youth – self-identify as HIV positive. Ruth Ellis Center is located in Detroit and served over 4,300 youth last year.

Michigan Department of Community Health reported last year that the state had seen "a significant increase in rates of HIV infections in 13-19 year olds, the majority of whom are black" men who have sex with men. And on Wednesday, the CDC released the 2010 HIV Surveillance Report. In a news release, officials highlighted the fact that the report "shows a 10% increase in the number of HIV diagnoses among persons aged 15-19 years and a 33 percent increase among persons aged 20-24 years."

Ruth Ellis Center staff say that 40 percent of the youth they work with – who are mostly African American LGBT youth – self-identify as HIV positive. Ruth Ellis Center is located in Detroit and served over 4,300 youth last year.

"The youth at Ruth Ellis Center know more about HIV/AIDS and how it is contracted in addition to harm reduction best practices than probably the vast majority of people living in Detroit and Southeast, Michigan," said Mark Erwin, director of operations at Ruth Ellis. "The problem lies within the fact that there isn't enough emergency, transitional and affordable housing for literally hundreds of LGBTQ youth in our community alone. Research shows that without stable housing, access to mental health services and affirming environments, LGBTQ youth are more likely to engage in risky behaviors."

Erwin says hundreds of LGBT youth are homeless on any given night in Detroit. This lack of housing leads to survival sex in many instances trading sex for food or a place to sleep. This puts many youth at high risk for HIV because they are unable to negotiate safer behaviors.

Advocates for those living with HIV say the crisis is exacerbated by a combination of economic realities and budget cuts.

Shrinking resources

Mark Peterson, a director of Michigan Positive Action Coalition, said Detroit has been disproportionately impacted by the epidemic since the beginning.

"There is no doubt that we continue to be in a state of crisis here," Peterson said adding, "Without a more concerted effort to ensure the most effective prevention interventions and continued access to high quality care, the situation can only get worse and the outcomes will be seen on the individual and community level."

Barbara Murray, executive director of AIDS Partnership Michigan also said shrinking resources are a growing concern for addressing the crisis in the city.

"The state is going to be hampered by expected cuts in CDC prevention funding," said Murray. "I believe the awards have been made, but do not know what the game plan is. Providers have been hampered by 3 month prevention contracts – which have just been increased to 6 months. It is very hard to plan and operate in such short chunks of time. Twelve month contracts are best ... 24 month contracts are even better."

Due to a realignment of the federal resources directed at the epidemic, the state stands to lose 33 percent of its annual funding by 2014. The federal government is moving resources to cities – such as Washington, D.C. – and regions – such as the south – that are being hardest hit by the epidemic. Federal HIV dollars used to be distributed based on the cumulative number of HIV/AIDS cases in a state – meaning places like California and New York received significantly more funding even as new infection rates decreased.

Ultimately, says HIV activist Peterson, officials will need to become more nimble and effective in addressing the crisis.

"It is our hope that both at the state and local level, those entrusted to manage these resources find new, more effective and more impactful activities both in care and prevention," says Peterson. "The time of operating in silos and seeing arbitrary jurisdictional issues as more important politically than providing the the best care and prevention services is long since over. We hope that the state and city can begin to apply resource-sharing practices that can overcome the current economic barriers we face. We can no longer afford to continue funding activities which do not address our highest impacted populations in prevention and we must ensure we do all we can to see that all people living with HIV in the Detroit area are supported to maintain consistent utilization of care services."

Find the other articles in this series online at www.pridesource.com

Michigan's LGBT Yellow Pages

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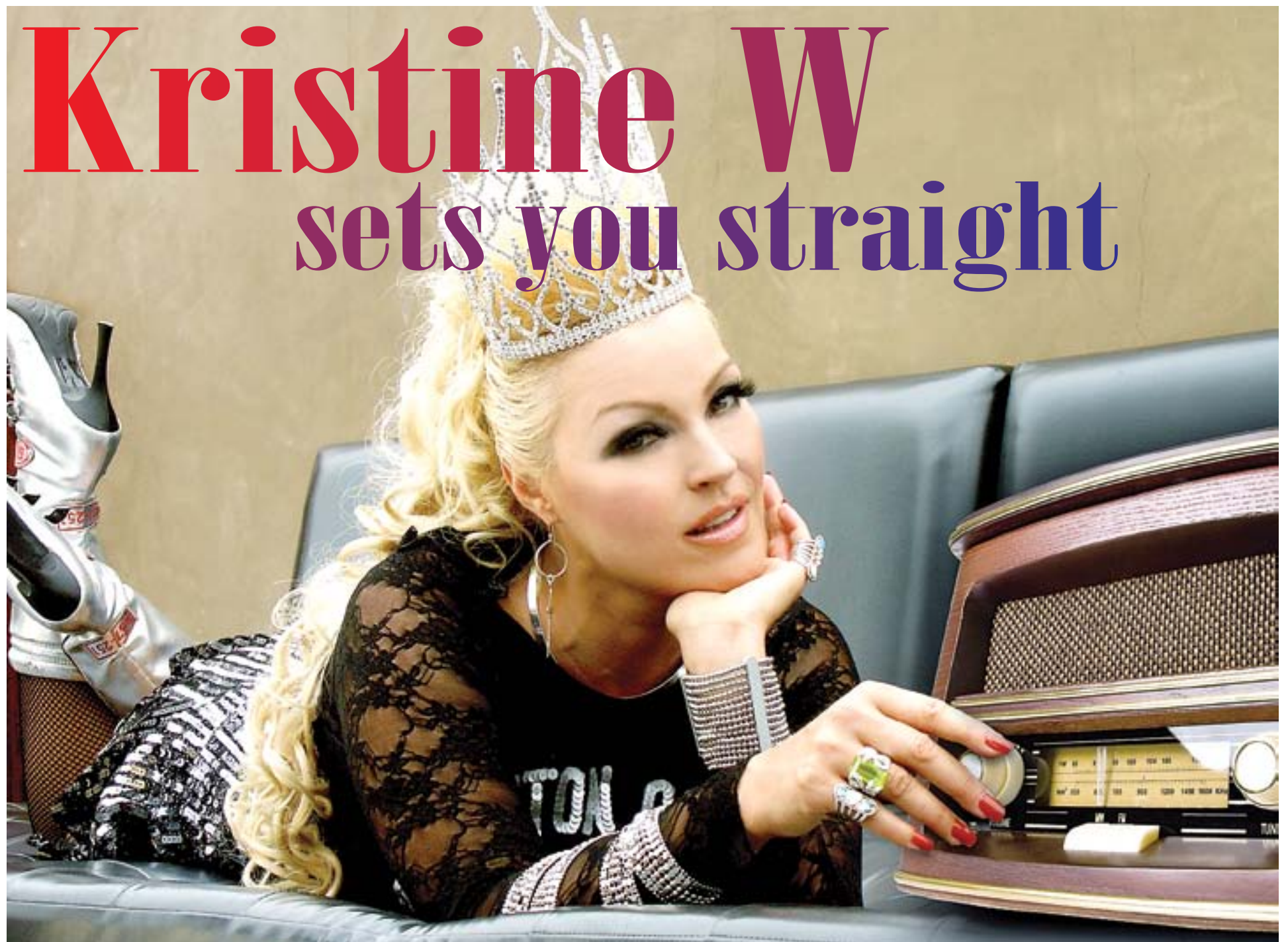
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Kristine W

sets you straight

Dance diva on new music, guiding her gays and returning to Detroit

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

What happens in Vegas doesn't always stay there. For instance, Kristine W – the chart-topping dance-music powerhouse adored by the gays – is heading to Detroit, where the Sin City-based singer will perform at 10 p.m. (doors open at 9) March 24 at Backstreet.

Kristine gave us a buzz recently to chat about her upcoming album, the closeted gay choir director who inspired her as a kid and the pressure on her – a farm girl from Washington – to go country.

What's new, Kristine?

Working on the new album. I just got out of

Kristine W

10 p.m. March 24
Backstreet
15606 Joy Road, Detroit
www.icedetroit.net

the studio, and got my hard drive stuffed in my purse. We do sessions and put everything on our hard drive, so I run around with hard drives stuffed in my purse. (Laughs)

The new album is so fun. Bimbo Jones is a great production team to work with. It's been a wild ride and very labor-intensive, but the next few months we're going to be really churning and burning to finish it up. We shot the album

cover with Mike Ruiz in New York this past week. We're just having a hard time coming up with a title. We're all over the place.

How do you approach new music?

I don't want to be an ambulance chaser. I always find it annoying that someone does what the last five people have done, so I try to create stuff that's different and tap into my audience and see what they're feeling at the moment and do songs they can relate to.

A lot of songs on the new album will be new productions of my original hits. We're doing a mix of brand-new material and a few of the No. 1s that we tend to do a lot, because if we don't people start freaking out. If there's no "Land of the Living" or "One More Try," you

get hate mail.

How much new music will we hear at this gig?

I don't think we're going to perform any of the new stuff, because this album doesn't come out until June. I just find that you really can't do that anymore. In five seconds, you have someone writing a song with the same title as yours, or using the same melodic hook. You gotta be so careful now. It used to be so fun to test-drive a reaction to a song, but you really can't do that with social media.

What do you remember about the last time you performed in Detroit – at Backstreet in 2006?

Being kind of scared! It was at night and we were

See Kristine W, page 16

► **Kristine W**

Continued from p. 15

trying to find the club, and then we found the door and it was so cool. The vibe is so much fun there.

Weren't you raised on a farm?

Yeah, totally. My grandpa was an alfalfa and wheat farmer and he raised black angus beef cattle for the Black Angus restaurant chain back in the day. So I kind of brought the ranch with me, because I have a little ranch where we perform. It looks like a little farmhouse, but it's actually a rehearsal studio. We call it "the ranch." It's on two-and-a-half acres, so we can be as loud as we want and nobody gets mad at us. I have my horses out there, and I have a sheep and a goat, and random animals that people drop off that they don't want anymore. (Laughs) My mom was telling me I remind her of Eva Gabor in "Green Acres."

So not many gay people around, I assume.

Not really. When I was a kid, the first person that I figured out was gay was my choir director – believe it or not, I figured that one out! (Laughs) Obviously he wasn't out at all, but my mom used to pretend to be his girlfriend and I was hip to the fact that he was definitely not her boyfriend, that he was her confidante or best friend. I was like, "Wait a minute!"

What kind of influence did he have on you musically?

I remember I'd go over to his house all the time; I just adored him. He was one of my best friends and he gave me piano lessons and singing lessons. He and I were super tight. He always gave me the solos because I had this big ol' voice, so I got to be the calling card as the church got fuller. People were talking about this kid who could sing really good. I brought an audience and helped make the church popular.

But he was my first. He was always around after my dad died when I was 3. I was about 8 years old when I realized that he was definitely not my mom's boyfriend. In Vegas we call them a "shill," where gamblers are hired by the casino to pretend that they're gambling. So, she was that. He was a sixth-grade teacher, and she knew that if anyone caught wind that he was gay, he would've lost his job – he would've lost everything. So I learned early on how the party rolls. When I was embraced by the gay community, I just thought how proud he would've been.

What was your mom like?

My mom was a working musician, so she performed six nights a week from 5 to 11 o'clock. I don't think she had a hardcore passion for it; it was more about survival. She's really good at the wigs; she looked like Liz Taylor. She had the black hair and beautiful blue eyes. And perfect boobs. I call her a musical therapist, because she sang half the time, talked half the time and knew everyone. It was like a "Cheers" atmosphere. And, for me, that's where that comes from.

How did you wind up taking the dance-pop route**instead of going country?**

There was a lot of pressure for me to do country because I was good at it. But I started winning these competitions in junior high as a jazz soloist, because my mom would perform on the weekends with jazz trios. I was around all these amazing musicians and people would constantly teach me old music. When I came to Vegas, there really wasn't any style of music I couldn't sing, because I grew up with a mom who sang country and sang jazz tunes and standards. My two best friends – one Mexican, one black – turned me onto all the killer R&B, soul and dance music.

I remember the turning point was when I was a kid and I heard Donna Summer on the radio and that just stopped me in my tracks – her combination of a gospel voice with dance music. I remember being a kid and my mom going, "What's wrong with you?"

You have more No. 1s on the Billboard dance charts than Donna Summer and Whitney Houston, both of whom also have big voices. What are your thoughts on Whitney's legacy?

While performing in Vegas, we did Whitney Houston medleys all the time. I remember us doing "Queen of the Night" and "I'm Every Woman." We did a whole medley for my Vegas show. Nobody sounded like her. They've tried to emulate her, but she's one of a kind.

I'm angry, because she was constantly surrounded by people. Why didn't someone just say, "This is it, sister, we gotta clean this shit up"? It's weird. I've been asking myself, "Why are you

"I remember the turning point was when I was a kid and I heard Donna Summer on the radio and that just stopped me in my tracks – her combination of a gospel voice with dance music. I remember being a kid and my mom going, 'What's wrong with you?'"

so mad about it?" But it's sad. They just watched a train go off its tracks. It makes my heart ache. I wish I would've been her friend. If my gay boys get out of hand, I figure out something.

Have you intervened in the lives of your gay friends before?

Oh god, yes. One, a really talented drag performer, lived with me for four or five months, and he got on crack. Boy, did I witness some shit. His teeth were falling out, and to see how he deteriorated in a year was just shocking. But I turned his life around. He's so successful now. I've never done any drugs, no pot, but I like my champagne.

That's hardcore.

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Out Night returns to Ann Arbor Film Festival

BY BENJAMIN JENKINS

Out Night returns to the 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival, North America's longest-running independent and experimental film festival, in the Michigan Theater's main auditorium at 9:30 p.m. March 28. This year's Out Night – the 11th of its kind – celebrates historic and influential LGBTQ films, featuring trailblazing lesbian filmmaker Barbara Hammer in person.

Hammer has created some of the first lesbian-made and LGBT-themed films in history, such as "Dyketactics" and "Women I Love." Many of her films deal with gender roles, lesbian relationships and coping with aging and family. Hammer comes to AAFF fresh off a month-long retrospective of her

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Receive \$3 off advance tickets for Out Night online by purchasing tickets at www.Brownpapertickets.com/producer/6567 and entering this discount code: **AAFF50BTL**

films at the Tate Modern in London.

Along with screenings of some of Hammer's greatest films, Out Night will feature Tina Takemoto's "Looking for Jiro" (2011); Ira Sachs's "Lady" (1994); Mike Hoolboom's "Frank's Cock" (1993) and Jose Rodriguez-Soltero's "Jerovi" (1965). Soltero's film was screened at the third AAFF in 1965 and created such controversy

that the University of Michigan nearly fired AAFF founder George Manupelli.

Out Night continues into the evening with an after party at Braun Court's SH\aut\ and \aut\BAR at 11 p.m. with complimentary appetizers and fire pits in the courtyard.

Ann Arbor Film Festival runs March 27-April 1 throughout various venues in downtown Ann Arbor.

AAFF also will feature two queer filmmakers during Films In Competition 11 at 1 p.m. April 1 at the Michigan Theater: George Kuchar's "Hold Me While I'm Naked" and Bobby Abate's "The Evil Eyes".

For more information, visit www.AAFilmFest.org/50 or call 734-995-5356.

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 'Dyketactics'

Barbara Hammer, 1974, 4 minutes

First film made by an openly lesbian American filmmaker to explore lesbian identity, desire and sexuality through avant-garde strategies.

Jerovi

Jose Rodriguez-Soltero, 1965, 11 minutes

A sexual probe of the Narcissus myth, Jerovi departs from earlier experimental work by Cocteau, Curtis Harrington, Willard Maas and others, which drew upon the Narcissus myth to explore the filmmakers' Freudian unconscious and homosexual desire.

Frank's Cock

Mike Hoolboom, 1993, 8 minutes

"A man talks about his friend Frank in a bold, funny, moving monologue about being born, living, fucking and dying as a gay man." – Sandra Cunningham, Toronto International Festival

Lady

Ira Sachs, 1994, 28 minutes

A portrait film of a purposefully unsettling kind, starring Dominique Dibbell of "The Five Lesbian Brothers." The exact identity of the redhead at the center of Lady is impossible to pin down. Is she a woman playing a man playing a woman, or more specifically, a lesbian playing a gay man playing a heterosexual woman? This purposeful ambiguity invites the audience to question the blurred parameters of sexuality, desire, and female identity.

Looking for Jiro

Tina Takemoto, 2011, 6 minutes

A queer meditation on the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, this musical mash-up video features drag king performance and homoerotic bread making.

Films in Competition 11

1 p.m. April 1

Michigan Theater
 'Hold Me While I'm Naked'
 George Kuchar, 1966, 15 minutes

A direct and subtle, sad and funny look at nothing more or less than sexual frustration and aloneness.

The Evil Eyes

Bobby Abate, 2011, 20 minutes

An homage to the death of the soap opera, "The Evil Eyes" is a 1960s era story of a grandmother faced with her mortality, a mother in mid-life crisis, and a son realizing his sexuality.

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Photo: Columbia TriStar

'21 Jump Street' makes queer cool

'80s-series reboot gets very funny (and gay) film makeover

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Using "21 Jump Street," the cinematic spinoff loosely based on the guilty-pleasure TV drama, as a progress-meter for the gay community is probably a bit ridiculous, but you have to give it up to the filmmakers for its anti-hatred: no, it's not cool to punch a gay black kid.

When a pair of dimwitted undercover cops, resigned to a converted church run by Captain Dickson (Ice Cube), head back to high school for a drug bust, they realize all that's changed: the "in" kids aren't the jocks and slackers; they're the tree-hugging brainiacs – and gays – who deal narcotics. And wearing your backpack single-shoulder? So last decade.

And therein lies the underlying hilarity of watching Channing Tatum, the stupid hot one, and Jonah Hill, the smart ugly one, team up as Jenko and Schmidt, respectively: meatball and meathead, together to take down the bad guys. Only they're not exactly hotshots. One's too wimpy to fire a shot; the other's clueless about Miranda rights. And they both like to ceremonialize a triumphant capture by dry-humping the criminals (ooh la la).

The initial-scene setup is the launching pad for non-stop silliness: we learn of Schmidt's

uncool Eminem phase and Jenko's douchiness toward him for asking a girl who's beyond him to prom. But who's the cool one now, bitches – it's Schmidt, who gets chummy with the school's drug-dealing crackerjack, Eric (Dave Franco, brother to James), and charms a cute chick named Molly (Brie Larson). Jenko's stuck learning what covalent bonds are with the chem nerds.

Tatum is awesomely dopey (fully redeeming himself for his stiff romantic-lead role in "The Vow"), playing off of Hill's wise-guy school-smarts in one of the best comedic duos in years. Both guys are game for anything (especially relentless dick-sucking jokes) and riotous to watch, whether in a shoot-out they're ill-equipped for, while helping each other hurl ("Let's finger each other's mouths"), or learning the hard way that, in these times, tolerance is hip.

A line like this, then – "Fuck you, 'Glee'!" – is brilliantly funny in the scope of this meta, culturally in-touch comedy. It's "Superbad" crossed with "Never Been Kissed," in which Drew Barrymore was an incognito journalist, but fully self-aware of everything: how Jenko looks "40 fucking years old" even though he's posing as a high-school student, the relevance of the "Twittersphere," and that all we do is "recycle shit from the past." Truth.

"21 Jump Street," however, knows how to turn near-shit into comedy gold, making it the funniest movie since "Bridesmaids" (speaking of, props to scene-stealer Ellie Kemper as hot-for-student Ms. Griggs). It's ball-busting funny throughout, crude to the max, and even affectionately bromantic. And hey, who can deny its evolved moral: You can never have enough penis.

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Joseph Fournier and Eva Rosenwald in "Home Life." Photo: Detroit Ensemble Theatre

It's all happening at the 'Zoo'

BY JOHN QUINN

The first line of "At Home at the Zoo" is "We should talk." That's deliberately misleading. There's a lot of talk; what we have here is the oft-quoted "failure to communicate," but there's so much more.

Edward Albee, arguably America's greatest living playwright, runs with that theme into dark, untapped regions of the human psyche, exploring the fundamental relationships that form personality. As is suitable in a play by the father of Theater of the Absurd in the U. S., the trip is sometimes amusing, sometimes disturbing, but always disorienting. Directors Barton Bund and Lynch Travis bring sense and sensibility to this rather schizophrenic work for the Detroit Ensemble Theatre – located, in point of fact, in Ferndale.

"At Home at the Zoo" had an unusual genesis. Act II, only slightly re-written, is Albee's very first play – the 1959 one-act "The Zoo Story." That has become one of the classics of the American theater, regardless of the fact that Albee sensed from the beginning that something was missing. Albee is intensely protective of his work, and ignored the temptation to tinker with the script. In 2009, when Hartford Stage in Connecticut commissioned a new one-act to be done with "The Zoo Story," Albee took the opportunity to fill in the blanks with a prequel entitled, "Home Life." The fact that the second act is 50 years older than the first accounts for the sensation that the two are out of sync. As the playwright has matured, his outlook has mellowed. That, though, does not detract from a compelling evening of drama.

"Home Life" opens in an apartment somewhere in Manhattan's East 70s.

REVIEW

At Home at the Zoo

Detroit Ensemble Theatre at Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale, Friday-Sunday through April 1. 100 minutes. \$18. 248-270-8440.

www.detroitensembletheatre.org

Peter (Joseph Fournier) and Ann (Eva Rosenwald) are a successful middle-class couple. They have two daughters, two cats, two parakeets, two TVs, two microwaves. But after 20 years of marriage, how well do they really know each other? Ann's ominous opening, "We should talk," reveals that their comfortable life is based on unexpressed compromise and concealed emotion. Their life, says Ann, is too tame; it should be shaken by chaos, disorder and madness. The quirky conversation remains pretty tentative – a recurring theme of "thinking about thinking about doing something" is a case in point – but we grasp that this couple is breaking new ground in honesty. Peter, very much at peace with the world, decides to adjourn to his favorite bench in Central Park for a few hours of light reading.

At the opening of the second act, "The Zoo Story," Peter's "me time" is interrupted by Jerry (Steven O'Brien), the very embodiment of chaos, disorder and madness. Jerry is a social outcast, starved for attention, and given to long narrations about his life. His increasingly intrusive and pushy – literally – behavior leaves each of us wondering where our individual breaking point would come. When do you tell an annoying stranger to scram? Peter waits too long, with grim results.

Thus we come to the missing piece in Albee's puzzle. When played alone, "The Zoo Story" is strictly Jerry's play. Peter is merely the sounding board to Jerry's increasingly psychotic rants. All we know about him is in the reserved comments he divulges to Jerry's onslaught of questions. Peter needed a more complete personality to explain why this guy just didn't close his book and go home 30 seconds after Jerry appeared. The audience now has a better understanding of this emotionally repressed, painfully polite specimen of the middle-class, and how social convention can turn to animalistic territoriality in a flash of anger.

This production works because both directors and actors have blended some of the disconnections between the acts. Fournier and Rosenwald have a very measured, even first act, where the silences are as eloquent as the dialogue. This is in contrast to O'Brien's antsy, deranged monologues in the second act, where Fournier becomes less a participant than a victim. But since his established character carries through, the climax of the play seems inevitable.

Although the production is appealing to any culturally aware audience, "At Home at the Zoo" is raw meat for the intellectual carnivores of American theater. Juicy debates are possible over whether Albee, able to expand on "The Zoo Story," SHOULD have done so. Does the new version compliment, or diminish the original? Are the two acts too dissimilar to be considered a whole play?

We have the playwright's own take on the issue. In a 2004 New York Times interview Albee opined, "I think, on the whole, asymmetry is probably better." I think I'll go along with that.

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Saturday, March 24, 2012 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 25, 2012 at 2 p.m.
Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 8 p.m.
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Editor's Picks

Outings

Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities present the 21st annual Chocolate Party fundraiser at the beautifully restored Victorian home of an avid supporter of both organizations located in Bay City.

Built in 1884, this charming home has been almost entirely restored to its original Victorian architecture and style over the last 27 years. The house is decorated in "Victorian clutter" style, meaning it is filled with rare and majestic objects collected from all seven continents.

Attendees are invited to bring decadent chocolates (homemade or store bought), mix, mingle and gorge at this potluck-style party. Donations for PFLAG and Perceptions are accepted at the door.

Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities Chocolate Party begins 7 p.m. March 24 at 1609 Fifth St. in Bay City. For more information, call 989-941-1458 or go to Perceptionssv.org.



Theater



The University of Michigan University Opera Theatre will present Igor Stravinsky's opera "The Rake's Progress." A cautionary tale about a life of indulgence, "The Rake's Progress" plays at 7:30 p.m. March 22, 8 p.m. March 23-24 and 2 p.m. March 25 at the Mendelssohn Theatre in Ann Arbor. Sung in English, the performances will feature supertitles.

"The Rake's Progress" concerns a callow young man, Tom Rakewell, who is convinced that good fortune will simply come his way. His loving fiancée Anne Trulove stands by him, but her father is not so easily swayed. "This is the only musical work I know that was inspired by artwork, or this case, etchings," states Maestro Katz. "Musically, there is more to this particular opera than singing beautiful melodies and being romantic. It has all sorts of rhythmic and diction challenges."

Tickets for The Rake's Progress are \$26 and \$20 reserved seating, with students \$10 with ID. Order by phone at 734-764-2538.

OUTINGS

Thursday, March 22

Legal Referral Services 4 p.m. Weekly advocacy program and referral services provided by AJ Skillman. AJ Skillman P.C., 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Men's Film Group 7 p.m. Social group to view and discuss films of interest to men. Film: The Dying Gaul, 2005. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Friday, March 23

LGBT AA/Al-Anon Roundup 5 p.m. Three-day conference for LGBT people recovering from substance abuse issues. Open speaker meetings, workshops, banquets and dance. \$35 conference only, \$84 includes meals. Together We Can, 200 W. Big Beaver, **Troy**. TWC@twcdetroit.com

Womyn's Film Group 7 p.m. Film: Fire; Two Hindu women struggle with loveless, arranged marriages. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

3rd Annual Beach Party 8 p.m. Night of prizes, drag queens, and games to welcome in the spring months. Suggested Donation: \$5 towards both Project (!) and Kalamazoo Pride. Project (!), 411 N Westnedge Ave., **Kalamazoo**. Pride2012@kgfrc.org Kgfrc.org/pride

Drag Queen Bingo 8 p.m. "This ain't your grandma's bingo." Hosts Sabin, Trixie Deluxe or September Murphy. Open to all 18+. Refreshments and bingo food fare. Reservations available by phone. Five15, 515 S. Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. Five15.net

Saturday, March 24

Transgender Faith Summit 1 p.m. A summit of individuals of all faiths to discuss what it means to be a transgender friendly faith congregation. RSVP at Facebook.com/events/135850776536383 Transgender Education Collaboration, 4010 Kalamazoo Ave. Southeast, **Grand Rapids**. Transgendercollab@gmail.com trans-edu.com

PFLAG and Perceptions Chocolate Party 7 p.m. Annual Chocolate Fundraiser for PFLAG & Perceptions at a beautiful Victorian home. People mix, mingle and sample decadent chocolate treats. Free will donations at the door. PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions, 1609 Fifth St., **Bay City**. 989-941-1458. info@perceptionssv.org Perceptionssv.org

Jackson High's Peace Prom 2012 - A Black and White Ball 8 p.m. Peace Prom is for LGBT teens and their allies who can't attend their own prom due to fear and homophobia. This year's theme is a black and white ball and attire is semi-formal. Admission: \$5. Jackson High School's Gay-Straight Alliance, 801 S. Mechanic St., **Jackson**. Cylorfagan@live.com facebook.com/events/219167688168874

An Evening with Don Was 8:30 p.m. Hosted by award-winning music journalist Gary Graff, the evening will feature a discussion along with a musical performance that celebrates the brilliant career of Don Was. Tickets: \$25-50. Jewish Gay Network, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield**. 248-661-1900. Jccdet.org/musicfest

Sunday, March 25

Agape Spirit Life Ministry Service 1 p.m. Potluck style event. Bring "The 12 steps of Forgiveness by Paul Ferrini" and a Bible to worship in a diverse, welcoming community. Participants will

use various books along with the Bible to gain practical tools for daily living as we worship. Every second and fourth Sunday. Agape Spirit Life Ministries, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Brunch and the Museum of Contemporary Art 1 p.m. Join the LGBT 20 Something's for a day in Detroit. Beginning with brunch at Good Gets Go To Paris Crepes, then an afternoon at the Museum of Contemporary Art. RSVP via email. Ages 18-33. Metro Detroit LGBT 20 Something's, 15 East Kirby, **Detroit**. Det20somethings@gmail.com The20somethings.org

TransCend 4:30 p.m. Open to persons 18 and older. Younger are welcome with parent or guardian permission. Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer Street, **Kalamazoo**. 269-349-4234. Tracy@kgfrc.org kgfrc.org

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Meets every Sunday for good discussions and good food. For any LGBTIQ or ally over 25 yrs. old. This week's topic: Should religious beliefs practices supersede health decisions? (No blood transfusions, no chemotherapy-no treatments by modern medicine) Get Out And Live!, 714 S. Washington St., **Royal Oak**. 248-981-4227. MarciWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive.me

Wednesday, March 28

Coping with Disabilities 1 p.m. For anyone with a mental or physical illness that makes every-day life more challenging. Discussions about LGBT friendly doctors, counseling, health benefits, and activities. Every second and fourth Wednesday. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Thursday, March 29

Transgender Day of Visibility Open Mic Night 6 a.m. Stories, songs, poems, or rants about experiences with transgender or gender non-conformist identities, issues, and communities. Allies welcome. No cover charge but snacks and drinks are available for purchase. Transgender Michigan, 515 S Washington, **Royal Oak**. 248-515-2551. Transgendermichigan.org

Cancer Coalition Health Fair 6 p.m. Representatives from more than 15 local cancer-related organizations sharing information about programs and resources, including family support activities, financial assistance, transportation, and summer camp sessions. Gilda's Club Metro Detroit, 3517 Rochester Road, **Royal Oak**. 248-577-0800. Gildasclubdetroit.org

Men's Film Group 7 p.m. Social group to view and discuss films of interest to men. Film: Zeropillia, 2005. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Friday, March 30

Ladies Night Out: "Pawing" to Celebrate Women 5 p.m. Comedienne Evelyn Smallbladder shares insight on aging gracefully. Tickets: \$35. Dearborn Animal Shelter, 26116 W. Warren, **Dearborn Heights**. 313-943-2697. Friends@dearbornanimals.org events/ladies-night-out

Ozone House's QueerZone 6:30 p.m. QueerZone is an Ypsilanti-based program that provides a safe space for LGBTQ youth to congregate, socialize, build community and access support services as needed. LGBTQ youth ages 13-20 are also encouraged to join Queerzone's private, confidential Facebook group to keep in touch with other queer youth. Ozone House, 1705 Washtenaw, **Ann Arbor**. 734-662-2265. Ozonehouse.org

5th Annual Drag Show 7 p.m. LGBT student organization for Saginaw Valley

Living Proud's annual drag show. \$1 donation at the door. SVSU's Living Proud, 7400 Bay Road, Saginaw Valley State University, **Saginaw**. Arhelton@svsu.edu

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Made in Dagenham; Sally Hawkins stars in this cheeky dramatization of the landmark 1968 labor strike. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale**. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Arabian Nights 9 p.m. Guest DJ will be mixing Middle Eastern Dance Music live! Hosted by Crystal Harding. \$10 cover charge will support new mini Scholarship program. AI GAMEA, 928 W. McNichols, **Detroit**. 313-427-3471. Info@algamea.org Algamea.org

Saturday, March 31

Adodi Detroit Men's Retreat 9 a.m. Adodi Detroit welcomes all SGL men of African descent 18+. Lunch and dinner are included in the registration. Register online. Adodi Detroit Same Gender Loving Men of African Descent, 1420 Hill St., **Ann Arbor**. 734-846-6545. AdodiDetroit01@gmail.com ComSites.google.com/site/adodidetroit

Lezread 4 p.m. Ann Arbor's book group for Lesbians. Meets the last Sunday of every month. Lezread, 319 Braun Court, **Ann Arbor**. 734-678-2478. lezread@yahoo.com

Transgender Visibility Day Celebration 6 p.m. A celebration of the Transgender community in West Michigan. RSVP at Facebook.com/events/312351588808868 Transgender Education Collaboration and The Network, 343 Atlas St SE, **Grand Rapids**. Transgendercollab@gmail.com trans-edu.com

Affirmations Spring Bash 7 p.m. Affirmations proudly celebrates 22 years of service as metro Detroit's community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender people and their allies at its 13th annual fundraising event, Spring Bash. Black Tie affair at the prestigious Detroit Institute of Arts. With this year's theme, The Art of Recreation, Affirmations will combine the elegance of the Detroit Institute of Arts with the excitement and vision of our new Executive Director, Antonio David Garcia under the grandeur of the Walter B. Ford Great Hall. Affirmations, 2100 Woodward, **Detroit**. 248-398-7105. Info@goaffirmations.org Goaffirmations.org

MUSIC & MORE

CONCERTS

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Beethoven's 'Emperor'" Robert Levin has been exploring Beethoven for the whole of his remarkable career and he brings his unique insights to Beethoven's towering "Emperor" Concerto. Tickets: \$15. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 23. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Josh Shea Trio" Shea performs on Kerrytown's own Steinway grand piano with Paul Keller and Pete Siers. Tickets: \$15-30 general, \$10 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. March 24 - March 24. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Kerrytown Concert House Daniel Fichera. Hess Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring and Siloti Prelude in B Minor. Tickets: \$10-25 general, \$5 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 26. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Michigan State University College of Music "Bach Around the Brahms

and Schumann Classics" Brahms' String Sextet Op. 18 and Schumann's Dichterliebe with Nils Neubert, tenor, violinists Ruggero Allfranchini and I-Fu Wang. Tickets: \$10. Music Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. March 23. 517-353-9958. Music.msu.edu

Michigan State University College of Music Charles Hiroshi Garrett, Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Michigan, Garrett's research and teaching interests focus primarily on 20th-century music, American music, jazz, popular music, music and racial/ethnic representation, and cultural theory. Tickets: \$10. Hart Recital Hall, Music Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 3 p.m. March 30. Music.msu.edu

Oakland University Department of Music, Theatre and Dance "Alarm Will Sound" Alarm Will Sound is a 20-member band committed to innovative performances. They have established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic virtuosity. Tickets: \$20 general, \$10 students. Varner Recital Hall, Varner Hall, Rochester. 7 p.m. March 30. 248-270-2030. Oakland.edu/mtd

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Skream & Benga" Skream and Benga are dubstep producers based in Croydon. Tickets: \$25. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 8 p.m. March 30. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Blackthorn" A fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 7:30 p.m. March 25. 734-761-1818. Theark.org

The Ark "Brian Vander Ark" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 29. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Heart Healers "J'DaVeY" Female vocalist Jack Davey and producer Brook D Leau are the flamboyant twosome that is J'DaVeY. Performing an eclectic mix of soul, new wave, funk, and hip-hop that defies the creative constraints of today's narrowly defined musical categories. Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Park Bar, 2040 Park Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 30. 313-685-5245. Concert1hearthealers.eventbrite.com/

OTHER

Michigan Opera Theatre "American Dance Theatre Alvin Ailey" By popular demand, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre returns to the Detroit Opera House once again in 2012, performing timeless Ailey classics and new works by contemporary choreographers. Always a favorite of Detroit audiences, AAADT will bring its extraordinary beauty and grace, electrifying energy and soulful spirit to Detroit. Tickets: \$29-61. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. March 29 - March 31. 313-237-SING. Michiganopera.org

Congregational Church of Birmingham "Green Screen Film Series - Forks Over Knives" Forks Over Knives examines the claim that most, if not all, of the diseases of affluence can be controlled, or even reversed, by rejecting animal-based and processed foods. Discussion to follow. Congregational Church of Birmingham, 1000 Cranbrook Road, Bloomfield Hills. 6 p.m. March 28. 248-514-8746. Ccbucc.org

Can-Do Kitchen "Labeling 101" a workshop for new and existing food business owners who are thinking about creating a label for a food product or want to take an existing label to the next level. The workshop is open to the public. Workshop fee is \$25 for current Can-Do Kitchen clients and \$35 for non-clients. Can-Do Kitchen, 511 Harrison St., Kalamazoo. 5:30 p.m. March 27. Fairfoodmatters.org/candokitchen.php

MGM Grand Detroit "A Night of Giggles &

For expanded listings & to add a listing, visit our website

Gloves" Night of fun and laughs as Mittens for Detroit presents, A Night of Giggles & Gloves II, a one-night only comedy show benefiting Mittens for Detroit. The star of Comedy Central's Key & Peele show Keegan-Michael Key and a variety of other local comedians will host the event. Tickets: \$25, \$50 VIP table seating. Table sponsors are also available. MGM Grand Detroit, Grand Ballroom, 1777 Third St., Detroit. 7 p.m. March 24. Mittensfordetroit.org

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

Almost, Maine \$15. Player's Guild of Dearborn, 21730 Madison, Dearborn. Through March 25. 313-561-TKTS. playersguildofdearborn.org

An Evening of Gratuitous Sex and Violence \$10. Flint City Theatre at Anteroom of the Good Beans Cafe, 328 N. Grand Traverse St., Flint. March 22-31. 810-237-4663.

Becky's New Car \$12-14. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Through March 25. 517-482-5700. Riverwalktheatre.com

Escanaba in Love \$20. St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild of Cranbrook, 400 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills. Through March 31. 1-88-71-TICKETS. StDunstansTheatre.com

Let's Murder Marsha \$33; show only \$15. Starlight Dinner Theatre at Waverly East Cafeterium, 3131 W. Michigan Ave., Lansing. Through March 24. Starlightdinnertheatre.com

Lucky Stiff \$19. Village Players, 34660 Woodward Ave., Birmingham. Through March 25. 248-644-2075. birminghamvillageplayers.com

Mixed Nuts \$13-15. Avon Players, 1185 Washington Road, Rochester Hills. Through March 31. 248-608-9077. Avonplayers.org

Next Fall \$15. Peppermint Creek Theatre Company at Creole Gallery, 1218 Turner St., Old Town Lansing. March 22-31. 517-372-0945. peppermintcreek.org

The Good Doctor \$12. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre at A2CT's Studio Theater, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. Through March 25. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org

The Wedding From Hell \$40. Get A Clue Mystery Theater at Page's Food & Spirits, 23621 Farmington Road, Farmington. March 24-25. 248-477-0099.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

The Cure For Love \$20. The University Theatre at Williams Theatre, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Through March 25. 269-387-6222. wmutheatre.com

The Rake's Progress \$20-\$26. U-M Opera Theatre at Mendelssohn Theatre, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor. March 22-25. 734-764-2538. tickets.music.umich.edu

PROFESSIONAL

At Home at the Zoo \$18. Detroit Ensemble Theatre at Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. 9 Mile Rd., Ferndale. Through April 1. 248-270-8440. detroitensembletheatre.org

Autobahn \$18. UDM Theatre Company at Loranger Architecture Building, 4001 W. Mc Nichols Rd., Detroit. March 23-April 1. 313-993-3270. theatre.udmercy.edu

Bidding You A Fond I Do \$25-\$35. Michigan Firehouse Museum, 110 W. Cross St., Ypsilanti. March 24. 734-547-0663. michiganfirehousemuseum.org

Dead and Buried \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. March 29-May 20. 313-

868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Dead Man's Shoes \$25-\$41. Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through April 8. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

Driving Miss Daisy \$16. What's That Smell? Productions at The Box Theater, 51 N. Walnut, Mount Clemens. Through March 31. 586-954-2311. Theboxtheater.com

H.M.S. Pinafore \$30, \$15 children. Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus at Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. 2:30 p.m. March 24. 313-237-SING. Motcc.org

Jersey Boys \$28-62. Miller Auditorium, 2200 Auditorium Dr., Kalamazoo. Through April 1. 269-387-2312. millerauditorium.com

Liter of the Free World \$10. Crawlspace Eviction at Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. March 23-24. 269-599-7390. CrawlSpaceTheatre.com

Living Stations \$12-\$35. Living Faith-Fine Arts Apostolate at Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through April 1. 800-585-3737. livingstations.org

Memphis \$30+. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 27-April 1. 1-800-Wharton. whartoncenter.com

Motor City Vaudeville Revival \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. The Detroit Fire Guild at The Emerald Theatre, 31 N. Walnut St., Mt. Clemens. 9 p.m. March 24. 248-506-2176. DetroitFireGuild.com

Motor City Vaudeville Revival \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. The Detroit Fire Guild at The Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 9 p.m. March 23. 313-247-5270. DetroitFireGuild.com

Over the River and Through the Woods \$16. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through March 24. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

Riverdance \$30-55. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. March 23-24. 517-432-2000. whartoncenter.com

Staged Reading Festival Admission is by donation. Magenta Giraffe Theatre Company at Abreact Performance Space, 1301 W. Lafayette #113, Detroit. March 31-April 1. magentagiraffe.org

Summer and Smoke \$12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through April 21. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

The Red Mill \$15-20. The Comic Opera Guild at The Village Theater of Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Rd., Canton. March 31-April 1. 734-394-5460. canton-mi.org/villagetheater

Theory of Mind \$8-12. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. March 28. 1-800-Wharton. whartoncenter.com

Vagina Monologues \$25. Shawn P. Entertainment at Wayne State Community Arts Auditorium, 450 Ruether Mall, Detroit. 7 p.m. March 25. 313-433-8384. Mix923FM.com

ART 'N' AROUND

Cranbrook Art Museum "The 2012 Degree Exhibition of Cranbrook Academy of Art" One of the largest and most exciting exhibitions of art and design in the country. Cranbrook Art Museum, 39221 Woodward Ave, Bloomfield Hills. March 21 - April 13. 877-462-7262.

Cranbrookartmuseum.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Flint Institute Book Discussion" Legendary writer, actor and performer Steve Martin displays compassion and skill of observation and understanding in his latest book "An Object of Beauty." Facilitated discussion at FIA. Books available in the Museum Shop. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint. March 22 - April 18. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Lawrence Street Gallery "Exposures: Photography 2012" Sixteenth annual photography exhibit, a juried show expected to draw submissions from approximately 100 area photographers. Awards will be given for work in black & white, color and alternative/experimental. Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, Ferndale. April 4 - April 27. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

Michigan State University Museum "MSU Museum Wine Tasting Benefit" The Wine Tasting Benefit features more than 150 award-winning selections, independently owned wineries, Michigan vineries, importers and industry professionals on-site. The evening also features live music, appetizers, a silent auction and door prizes. Tickets: \$40. Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, Harrison Road and Michigan Ave., East Lansing. 7:30 p.m. March 30. 517-355-2370. Museum.msu.edu/?q=node/359

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit "Joshua White and Gary Panter's Light Show" Joshua White and Gary Panter's Light Show is a new exhibition organized especially for the Museum by two great pioneers of multimedia art. White and Panter have been working together since the late 1990s, and this exhibition is their largest collaborative project to date. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Feb. 10 - April 29. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Riverside Arts Center "The Life and Times of the Pine" Paintings and drawings for this show started with a story about the life and times of a pine cone, and then continued on to include other landscapes and studies of and with pines. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. March 1 - March 31. 734-480-2787. Riversidearts.org

Riverside Arts Center "The Life and Time of the Pine" Paintings and drawings for this show started with a story about the life and times of a pine, and then continued on to include other landscapes and studies of and with pines. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. March 1 - March 31. 734-483-7345. Riversidearts.org

The Detroit Institute of Arts "Gift of a Lifetime: The James Pearson Duffy Collection" The DIA received the rich art collection from James Pearson Duffy, Detroit's most unorthodox collectors. Showcases drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures and photographs. Free with museum admission. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward, Detroit. Sep. 15 - May 13. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Haron Mirza" Haroon Mirza is a noted visual artist who wants us to listen, to train our ears on the incidental sounds that surround us, and to connect sound to the objects that create it. University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St, Ann Arbor. March 4 - July 22. 734-647-0524. Umma.umich.edu

Yourist Studio Gallery "Serving It Up Just Desserts!" A juried exhibition of ceramic dessert ware by Michigan potters, including a special show of vintage-style aprons. Admission: free. Yourist Studio Gallery, 1133 Broadway St., Ann Arbor. March 1 - April 8. 734-665-5696. Youristpottery.com



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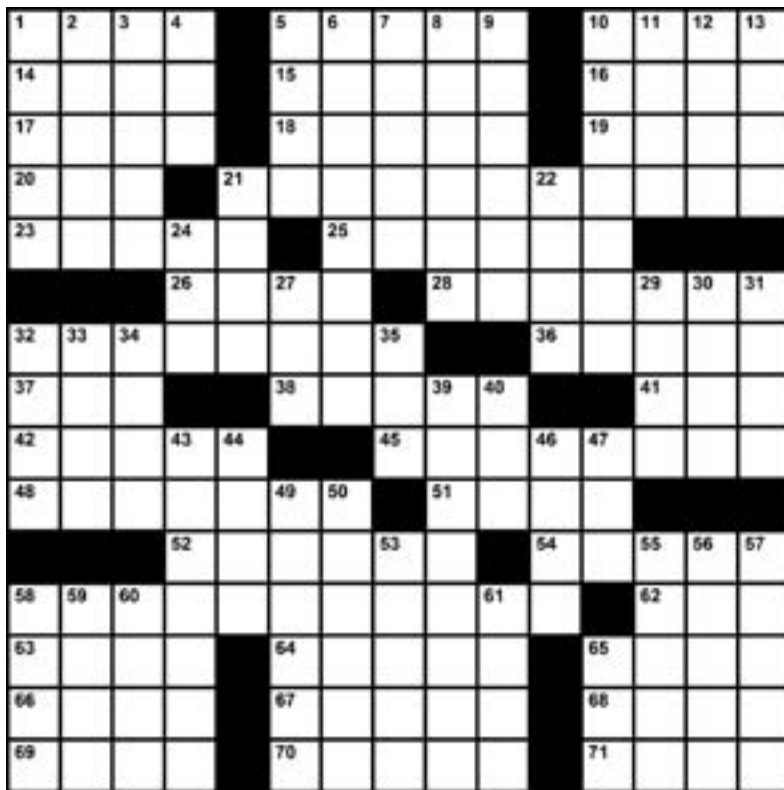
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Rachel Has Two Daddies



Across

- 1 With 32-Across, portrayer of one of Rachel's dads
- 5 Take down a peg
- 10 Bone of the leg
- 14 Trucker's rod
- 15 Runway walker
- 16 Go in only partway, at the beach
- 17 "It's ___ a while"
- 18 Big name in Chinese history
- 19 Mail carriers at Hogwarts
- 20 Suntan spoiler
- 21 With 45-Across, portrayer of one of Rachel's dads
- 23 Cruising, maybe
- 25 Cozy corners
- 26 Pull a boa behind you?
- 28 Least taxing
- 32 See 1-Across
- 36 Beginning to come?
- 37 Piglet's pal
- 38 Taters
- 41 Kind of will
- 42 Seminal computer
- 45 See 21-Across
- 48 Classified rectangles
- 51 Part played by Nabors
- 52 Unexpected pleasures

- 54 Tickle a funny bone
- 58 Duet sung by Rachel's two daddies
- 62 Current events in Corinth?
- 63 Poet Gidlow
- 64 Stay home for supper
- 65 State, in St. Lô
- 66 Actor Mapa
- 67 "I Got a Name" singer Jim
- 68 It was gauche, for Debussy
- 69 "The Bridge" poet Crane
- 70 Patton's vehicles
- 71 Rachel's TV show

Down

- 1 "Star Wars" villain with a big tongue
- 2 Bring to bear
- 3 They bother bitches
- 4 Low boggy land
- 5 Pt. of USA
- 6 Sex with the top on bottom?
- 7 Ike's opponent
- 8 Medium meeting
- 9 Inventor Otis
- 10 Kurtz of "More Tales of the City"
- 11 Overhead predator
- 12 "Spamalot" writer Eric
- 13 Monster's loch
- 21 Streisand, for short

- 22 New Ager John
- 24 TV announcer Hall
- 27 Gore and Green
- 29 Canal traveled by New York ferries
- 30 Bear market order
- 31 Work the land
- 32 What the fruits did in the orchard
- 33 Sometime Capote associate Chaplin
- 34 Tender ender?
- 35 Elton John's mother
- 39 Crankcase rod, or slang for your rod
- 40 Porking place?
- 43 What drawers do
- 44 Serious attention
- 46 Encourage the cast
- 47 Line of Todd Oldham dresses?
- 49 Do a private eye's job
- 50 1943 Bogart film
- 53 Range of the Rockies
- 55 "___ we meet again"
- 56 Like a metrosexual
- 57 Makeup maker Lauder
- 58 Positive reply
- 59 Stew in Sitges
- 60 Friendly opening
- 61 Wallet wad
- 65 Piece of work

Solution on page 28

Pet of the Week



Say hello to Moon Mist!

This happy-go-lucky Beagle mix is a year-old and weighs just 30 pounds. A lover of belly rubs and playing with stuffed animals, Moon Mist enjoys running around in the yard and would prefer an active family that can keep up with her. Come meet her today! The adoption fee includes sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations and much more! For more information, please contact the Michigan Humane Society's Berman Center for Animal Care in Westland at (734) 721-7300 and provide the pet ID number, 710581. Photo courtesy Michigan Humane Society.



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Horoscopes

Be alert, Cancer!

BY JACK FERTIG

The Sun moving into Aries passes Mercury, retrograding into Pisces, and then goes on to conjoin Uranus. Egotistical ideas and smug certainty will be punctured. Let it go and laugh.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Arguments with your partner are less about your partner and more about your own worries, fears and doubts. Remember you two are on the same side! You still have resources. Priority No. 1: Take care of your health!

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): You're looking much too good for your own good. An old fling may show up for an encore, but it's just that. This is no time to start a new relationship, revive an old one, or take for granted the one you have going.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): Your ruler Mercury retrograding into Mercury may have you feeling and acting like Gracie Allen (she's on YouTube). If you can capture her charm, keep your head on straight and keep a sense of humor, you'll be ahead of the game.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): Spring starts with all eyes on you. You will surprise everyone and very likely yourself. Planning is important, even though plans will go awry. Think ahead with contingencies, and be ready to improvise. Be alert, but relax. You can dazzle everyone.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): The craziest ideas confronting you are exactly the ones you should entertain. The state of the world proves a lot of bright people have been wrong about important matters, so let go of old ideas. A true philosopher is always open-minded.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Share your darkest, kinkiest fantasies with someone who can help them come true. If it involves cheating on your partner, forget it. One of you is perhaps too sensitive, but feelings still have to be accepted and issues handled respectfully.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Your ruler, Venus, is not a "good girl" but a famous seductress. Like it or not, she's shining the red light on you. Much fun? Perhaps. Just be very careful not to get into a relationship you'll regret, or to lose one you value.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Treat confusing and mixed messages from your friends with good humor. That doesn't mean you should make fun of them! You're probably as much at fault. Listen to your partner. The less you like it, the more you'll benefit.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): Guessing that your boss doesn't know what he or she is doing, you could well be right, but pointing that out won't help you at all. Stick to your own work the best you can!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): The best way to avoid stupid arguments is to avoid people, not necessarily just the stupid ones. Especially keep relatives at a safe distance. Your hyper-active brain needs some calming. Hide out and meditate.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): As recent mistakes come to light, don't even think about shifting blame or keeping them hidden. Fess up and make it right. With Mercury retrograde, everyone's screwing up a bit these days. Being forthright and responsible will get you points.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): Inspirations or worries over money are not as important as they seem. The first ideas that come into your head are wrong, but if you figure out why, you can come up with something outrageously right.

Jack Fertig, a professional astrologer since 1977, is available for personal and business consultations in person in San Francisco, or online everywhere. He can be reached at 415-864-8302, through his website at www.starjack.com, and by email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.



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Ann Arbor-Friday

7:30 pm, St. Andrews Episcopal Church Gay AA, 306 N. Division St. Closed/Discussion.

Bloomfield Hills-Thursday

7:00 pm „Sobriety in The Hills Gay AA, Kirk in The Hills Church, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Detroit-Tuesday / Friday

8:00 pm, Downtown Gay AA, Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 West Fort St. Closed/Discussion (Open 1st Friday of every month).

Farmington Hills-Monday

8:00 pm, Suburban West Gay AA, Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halstead (Between 10 & 11 Mile Roads) Closed / Discussion.

Ferndale-Monday / Wednesday / Friday

11:30 a.m., Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Wednesday

8 p.m., Diversity Wednesday Gay AA, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 540 W. Lewiston @ Livernois. Closed/Discussion.

Ferndale-Saturday

1 p.m. Brown Baggers Gay AA, Affirmations, 290 West 9 Mile Rd. Closed/Discussion.

8 p.m. Go After Your Sobriety Gay AA, Drayton Ave Presbyterian Church, 2441 Pinecrest. Closed/Discussion.

Livonia-Friday

8 p.m., West Side Story's Gay AA, Providence Medical Center, 7 Mile & Newburgh. Closed/Discussion.

Pontiac-Tuesday / Thursday / Sunday

8 p.m., Pontiac Gay AA, Shrine of St. Joseph, 400 West South Blvd. Closed/Discussion.

Warren-Monday

7:30 p.m., Eastside Serenity Gay AA, Faith-Trinity United Church of Christ, 12221 Martin Rd. East of Hoover. Closed/Discussion.

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Solution to puzzle from page 26

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Cocktail Chatter

Arg! Rum!

BY ED SIKOV

Onboard the *Neue Weimar*, queen of the Deutche-America line: I write this column on the second day of the honeymoon Dan and I never had the chance to take before. We're on one of those VSOP cruises you're always seeing ads for – not a Pacifica cruise, the brand aimed at the younger set with ads featuring hairless, Speedoed gym twinks, but a VSOP, the one pitched at those over, um, 40. Well, I am here to tell you that the average gay man over, um, 40 is in no better physical condition and has no flatter abs, nor a firmer rear, than the average straight man over 23. In fact, I've never seen a more grotesquely obese shriek of gay men in my life. (Fish swim in schools; gay men move in shrieks.)

Don't get me wrong: there are plenty of stiffy-worthy hunks aboard. The hormones are raging; the heady whiff of male funk wafts through the corridors like tear gas in Syria. Everywhere you look there's some shirtless dreamguy with military shoulders and a Peter Pan butt. But the view is often blocked by an elephantine gentleman wearing shorts that could have been sewn together for a circus sideshow with more acreage of naked flesh on his single gargantuan body than on the 10 guys he's blocking. *What is wrong with this country?* No, we do not need a breakfast of fried eggs, hash browns, bacon, toast, sausage, waffles with syrup and butter, and a side of grits and, oh, yes, that chocolate chip muffin looks good.... It's amazing this tub still floats.

Anyway, last night was our Bon Voyage party. The theme was "Pirates!" We've had too much on our minds to deal with pulling together clever theme-night outfits. Apparently so did a lot of other guys, who just brought black eye patches. (One campy fellow added a wig and turned himself into Bette Davis in "The Anniversary.") But then I spotted two men leaning over the railing wearing matching vintage-looking baseball uniforms with the name "Waner" on the back, and I laughed so abruptly I spat some rum out of my mouth and onto Dan's new white T-shirt. "Lovely," he snarled. "Sorry, but look!" I cried, pointing. "I don't get it," said the sports-hating Manhattanite as he vainly blotted the brown stains with a paper cocktail



napkin. "Paul and Lloyd Waner! Pittsburgh Pirates from '20s! We're meeting these guys. Now!"

I dragged a disgruntled Dan through the throngs of one-eyed sea thieves to the two baseball legends, who turned out to look even better from the front than they did from the back. Their firm, round asses were flawlessly stitched into their pants, but their strapping chests and long, lean abs were outlined in what appeared to be spandex. They were both quite cute, too. "Which one's 'Big Poison' and which one's 'Little Poison'?" I shouted over the blasting music. "Thank you," they yelled back in unison. "You're the only guy on this ship of fools who knows anything about baseball," said the taller of the two. "I know nothing about baseball," I confessed. "I just grew up in Pittsburgh." "Good enough," said the other one. "Yuns havin' fun?" We sure did, especially when they turned out to be players in more than one sense of the word.

Rum

Get yourself a bottle of *good* rum – not the kind you mix with cola or waste in one of those hideous fruit-a-bumbas everybody's supposed to drink on Caribbean cruises. I like Gosling's Black Bermuda and Haiti's Betancourt. Pour it over ice or drink it neat. Savor it, like scotch or good bourbon. And say "arg" a lot.

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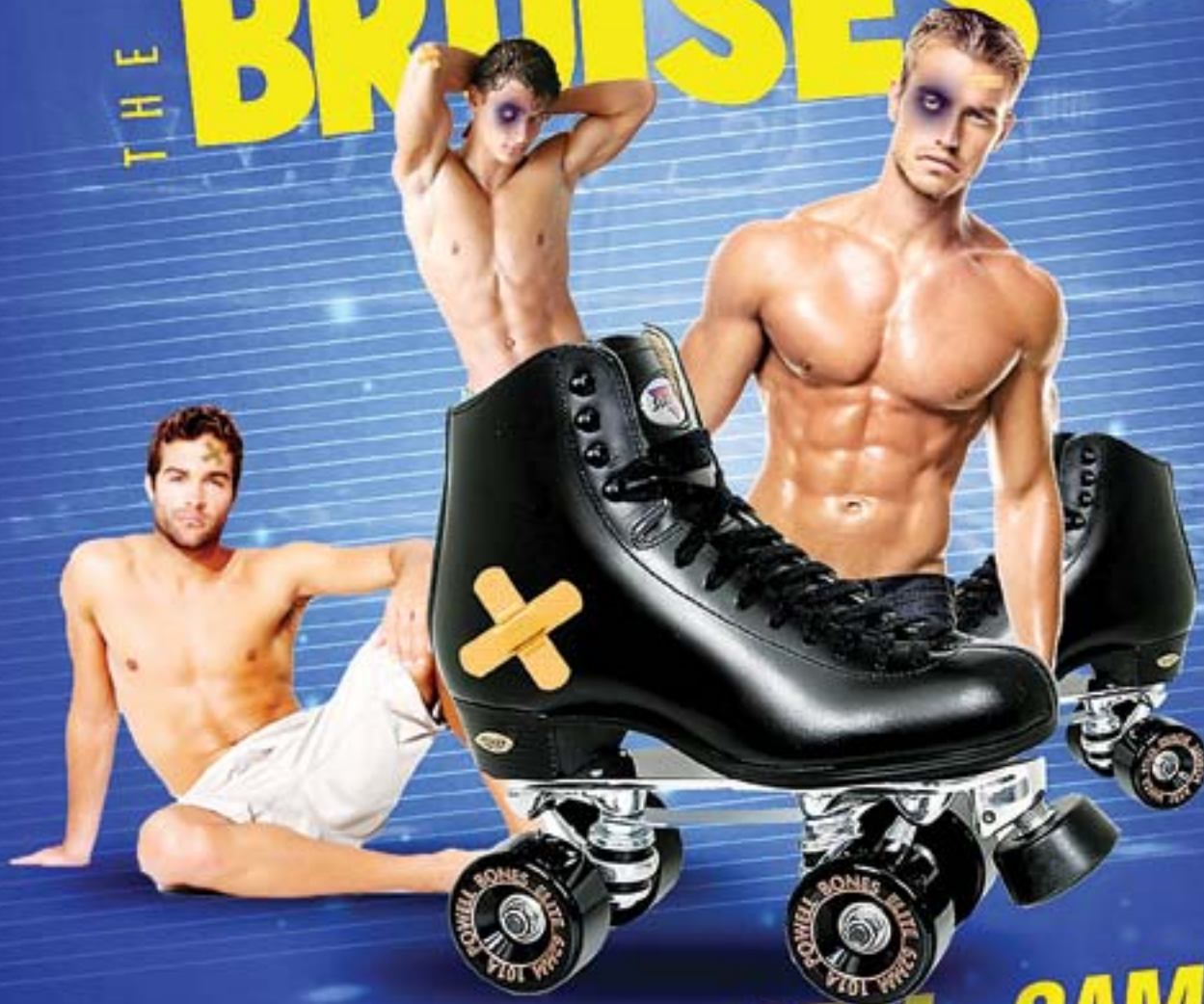
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